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The notability of Lamb's head was balanced by that pair of "immaterial legs," upon which the French critic Philarète Chasles is our first authority: —

I was at James Valpy's one evening in June, 1818, when a little, dark, old fellow came in; one could only distinguish a head, then big shoulders, then a delicate body, and finally two artistically slender legs, which were almost imperceptible. Under his arm was a green umbrella, and over his eyes a very old hat. Wit, sweetness, melancholy and gaiety gushed in torrents from this extraordinary physiognomy. After first seeing him, you did not think any more of his ridiculous body; it seemed as if something purely intellectual was before you, soaring above matter, burning through the material form, like light, and overflowing everywhere. There was neither health, nor strength and scarcely sufficient anatomical reality on those poor little spindles, clothed in stockings of Chinese silk, ending in impossible feet, encased in large shoes, which, placed flatly on the ground, advanced slowly in the manner of a web-footed creature. But one did not notice these singularities, one saw only the magnificently developed forehead, on which his lustrous black hair curled naturally, the great, sad eyes, the expression of the large brownish, clear pupil, the excessively fine nostrils, cut more delicately than has ever been seen in others, the curves of the nose very like those of Jean Jacques in his portraits. All this, the oval of the face, nobly long, the exquisite contour of the mouth, and the beautiful pose of the head, lent dignity, and that of the highest kind—intellectual dignity—to this weakly and disproportioned organization.

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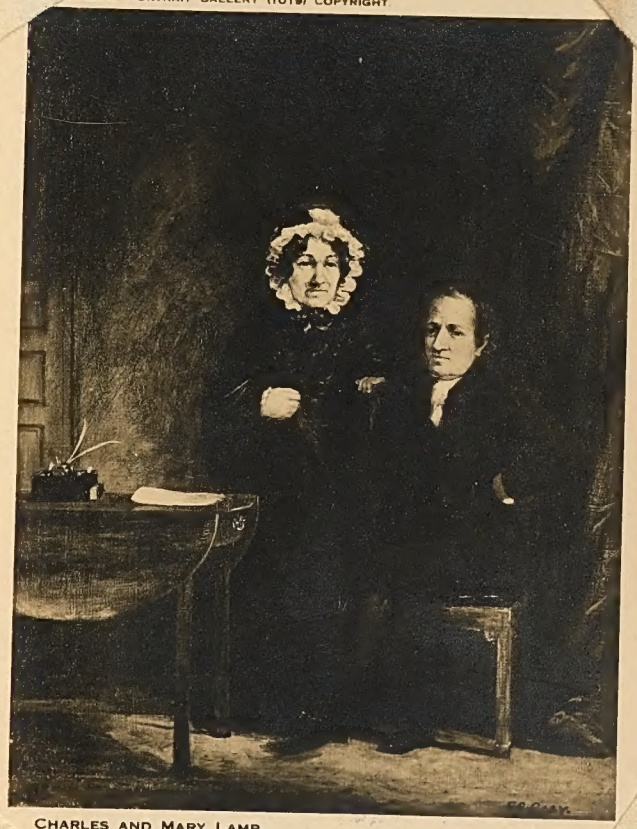

CHARLES AND MARY LAMB.
PAINTING BY FRANCIS STEPHEN CARY

Charles Lamb stands alone in English literature. Coleridge, who, on paper, never made a mistake, said of him that he

has more totality and individuality of character than any man I know or have ever known. In most men we distinguish between the different powers of their intellect, as one being predominant over the other. The genius of Wordsworth is greater than his talent, though [that is] considerable. The talent of Southey is greater than his genius, though [that is] respectable; and so on. But in Charles Lamb it is altogether one; his genius is talent, and his talent is genius, and his heart is as whole and one as his head.

Talfourd's reminiscence of C.L.

"Methinks I see him before me now, as he appeared then, & as he continued with scarcely any perceptible alteration to me during the 20 years of intimacy which were closed by his death.

a light frame, so fragile that it seemed as if a breath would overthrow it, clad in clerk-like black, was surmounted by a head of form & expression the most noble & sweet. His black hair curled crisply about an expanded forehead; his eyes, softly brown, twinkled with varying expression, though the prevalent feeling was sad. & the nose slightly curved & delicately carved at the nostril with the lower outline of the face regularly oval completed a head which was finely placed on the shoulders & gave importance & even dignity to a diminutive & shadowy stem. Who shall describe his countenance catch it's quivering sweetness, & fix it for ever in words. Deep thought, striving with humour, the lines of suffering wreathed into cordial mirth and a smile of painful sweetness

THE WORKS OF
CHARLES LAMB

EDITED BY
WILLIAM MACDONALD

IN TWELVE VOLUMES
VOL. I

THE ESSAYS OF ELIA

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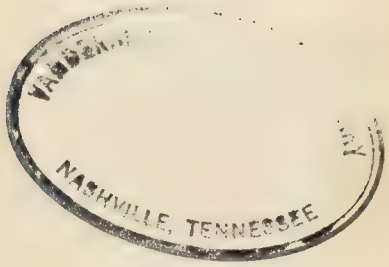
Charles Lamb

THE
ESSAYS OF ELIA
BY
CHARLES LAMB

EDITED
WITH A PREFACE
BY
WILLIAM MACDONALD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY
C. E. BROCK

LONDON
J. M. DENT & CO.
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.
1903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CONTENTS

PAGE

List of Illustrations ix

General Preface xiii

THE ESSAYS OF ELIA

The South-Sea House 1

Oxford in the Vacation 13

Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago 23

The Two Races of Men 45

New Year's Eve 54

Mrs Battle's Opinions on Whist 64

A Chapter on Ears 74

All Fools' Day 83

A Quaker's Meeting 88

The Old and the New Schoolmaster . . 97

Valentine's Day 110

Imperfect Sympathies 115

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Witches and other Night Fears	129
My Relations	139
Mackery End, in Hertfordshire	148
Modern Gallantry	157
The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple	166
Grace Before Meat	185
My First Play	195
Dream-Children; a Reverie	201
Distant Correspondents	209
The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers	217
A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis	228
A Dissertation upon Roast Pig	241
A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People	253
On some of the Old Actors	263
On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century	281
On the Acting of Munden	292
Notes	297

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Charles Lamb from the engraving by Henry Meyer (Photogravure) *Frontispiece*

PAGE

Headpiece—Contents vii
Tailpiece— do. viii
Headpiece—List of Illustrations ix
Tailpiece— do. xii
Headpiece—General Preface xiii
Tailpiece— do. liv
Headpiece—The South-Sea House 1
'How would he chirp and expand over a muffin' . . 6
'John was not without his hobby' 8
Tailpiece—The South-Sea House 12
Headpiece—Oxford in the Vacation 13
'What a place to be in is an old library' 17
Tailpiece—Oxford in the Vacation 22
Headpiece—Christ's Hospital five and thirty years ago . 23
'In a by-nook of the cloisters' 25

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

'Wanton like young dace in the stream' 28
'Used to carry away openly' 31
'How neat and fresh the twigs looked' 39
Tailpiece—Christ's Hospital five and thirty years ago . . 44
Headpiece—The two races of men 45
'He will make one hearty meal' 51
Tailpiece—The two races of men 53
Head iece—New year's eve 54
'Impertinent and misbecoming familiarities inscribed upon your ordinary tombstones' 60
Tailpiece—New year's eve 63
Headpiece—Mrs Battle's opinions on whist 64
'Those hard head-contests' 72
Tailpiece—Mrs Battle's opinions on whist 73
Headpiece—A chapter on ears 74
'What a contrast to Hogarth's laughing audience' . . 79
Tailpiece—A chapter on ears 82
Headpiece—All fools' day 83
Tailpiece— do. 87
Headpiece—A Quaker's meeting 88
'The strong man bowed down' 93
Tailpiece—A Quaker's meeting 96
Headpiece—The old and the new schoolmaster . . . 97
'He must seize every occasion to inculcate something useful' 105
Tailpiece—The old and the new schoolmaster . . . 109
Headpiece—Valentine's day 110
Tailpiece— do. 114
Headpiece—Imperfect sympathies 115
'Faces . . . that have looked kindly on one' . . . 123
'Discovered she had charged for both meals' . . . 125
Tailpiece—Imperfect sympathies 128
Headpiece—Witches and other night-fears 129
'Serving a warrant' 131
'Methought I was upon the ocean billows' . . . 137
Tailpiece—Witches and other night-fears 138

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

Headpiece—My relations 139

'You must spy at it through your finger' 145

Tailpiece—My relations 147

Headpiece—Mackery End, in Hertfordshire . . . 148

'The image of welcome' 153

Tailpiece—Mackery End, in Hertfordshire 156

Headpiece—Modern gallantry 157

'Drenched in the rain' 159

'Tenderly escorting a market-woman' 161

Tailpiece—Modern gallantry 165

Headpiece—The old Benchers of the Inner Temple . . 166

'A pretty device of the gardener 168

'Clouds of snuff' 173

'Their walks upon the terrace' 179

Tailpiece—The old Benchers of the Inner Temple . . 184

Headpiece—Grace before meat 185

'These exercises . . . have little in them of grace or gracefulness' 191

Tailpiece—Grace before meat 194

Headpiece—My first play 195

Headpiece—Dream-children: a Reverie 201

'My little ones crept about me' 203

Tailpiece—Dream-children: a Reverie 208

Headpiece—Distant correspondents 209

Tailpiece— do. 216

Headpiece—The praise of chimney-sweepers . . . 217

'It is good to give him a penny' 219

Headpiece—A complaint of the decay of beggars in the metropolis 228

'Jostle with him for the wall' 231

'The infant would stare at the mighty man brought down to his own level' 237

Tailpiece—A complaint of the decay of beggars in the metropolis 240

Headpiece—A dissertation upon roast pig 241

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
'You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring?'	244
'A sage arose . . . who made a discovery' . . .	247
Headpiece—A bachelor's complaint of the behaviour of married people	253
'Expected to bring our tribute and homage' . . .	256
Tailpiece—A bachelor's complaint of the behaviour of married people	262
Headpiece—On some of the old actors	263
'Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Sir Toby Belch' . . .	270
'Ben—the pleasant sailor which Bannister gives us' . .	277
Tailpiece—On some of the old actors	280
Headpiece—On the artificial comedy of the last century .	281
Tailpiece— do. do. .	291
Headpiece—On the acting of Munden	292
Tailpiece— do.	294

GENERAL PREFACE :

A DISCOURSE OF EDITIONS PAST AND PRESENT

Now it is no Easie Matter to give a *Good Reason* for *Writing at all*. . . . But *Prefaces* are wholly *Inexcusable;* Only an Idle Deal of *Fiddle-Faddle* betwixt the *Writer* and the *Reader*, made *worse* by *Care* and *Pains;* and Digested, out of *Vulgar* and *Pedantick Common-Places*, into one Mass of *Putid* and *Elaborate Folly.*

SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE: Preface to *Tully's Offices.*

THAT Charles Lamb, who less than any one else cared for the ceremonial paraphernalia of life or the additional impertinences, the scholiastic superfœtations of literature, should have had assigned to him a succession of laborious and emulous Editors, we may regard as a whimsical or a sinister freak of Fate, bringing in its revenges upon a careless soul. But that each of these Editors should have something important to say in disparagement of his predecessors and in praise of himself, is manifestly no anomaly, but a Law of Nature which no well-disposed person would seek to run counter to. The present Editor, being extremely well-disposed to all mankind, conforms gladly, and will try to do so to everybody's satisfaction.

The Bibliography of Charles Lamb (like, to some extent, the story of his life) is a subject of which our knowledge has come together slowly, in fragments,

and of which no account seems to be ever quite final. It is not necessary, however, to discuss here the various tomes, with their title-pages and their contents, published by Lamb during his own lifetime, but we must note the halting character of the first steps towards a Complete Collection made by his friends Talfourd, Moxon and others, after his death. Setting aside the essentially biographical labours of Talfourd, his edition of the *Letters* and his *Final Memorials*, we may say that those friends recorded their love of the man without doing very much for the author. They re-issued as "Complete Works" the things which Lamb had himself first published in book form or had lived long enough to reclaim from magazine obscurity and give to the world with his final corrections, and with his name, or his pseudonym, on a title-page. But out in the world, astray in the magazine wilderness, there were wandering children of his brain not yet reclaimed by him. These wanderers—these lost Lambs—Talfourd and the rest gave hardly a thought to, still less did they see that it was their duty to search for them and bring them into the kindly fold among their kindred pieces in a piously elaborated Complete Edition. The principle on which those first Editors acted—of recognising as a man's literary *Works* only the contents of his *books*, and not the whole range of his published *writings*—was an obvious one, and had the merit of making for editorial ease ; but as it still continues to be effective, by a kind of anachronism, in some of the best modern editions, it is worth while pointing out in a few words how perilous and absurd that principle was. Let me premise—what all readers will concede at once—that there are few works in the English language from which we would less willingly spare any considerable portion, or any page or paragraph, than the *Essays of Elia :* there are

few works which bear more unmistakably the enhancing and inherent sign-manual of their authorship, the personal mark and character which we know them by and for which we value them. And now let us see.

The *Elia* Essays were all simply magazine contributions, written to serve the literary needs of the public during the given month ; and the Series may be considered as having begun in August 1820. In the last days of 1822 Lamb was arranging their republication, and in 1823 the famous little book came from the press, without the author's name on the title-page. It did not, however, contain all the *Elia* Essays which had seen the light up to that time. Therefore it is fair to assume that, had Lamb died in 1823, the matter which was omitted from that volume would no doubt have been variously regarded by the subsequent race of Editors : by the early, lazy, and half-awakened ones (consequently a little purblind), as dim and dubious matter, which might as well be left alone : by the more pious but scrupulising later ones, as something that did not belong to the proper category of his *Works*, and must therefore be relegated to some kind of appendix. However, Lamb lived ; and he gathered that matter—and other matter of earlier date, and more deeply buried still—into another volume, into the *Last Essays of Elia*, which he arranged not long before his death. But now observe again. This volume, the *Last Essays of Elia*, was published in 1833. And yet of the twenty-four Essays therein collected, *nineteen* had been published as long back as 1826, and the majority of them earlier—and had therefore lain, for periods of from seven to twenty years, in an imprisoned, dubious, purgatorial state, quite uncertain of the call which should resurrect them to the light.

What does this mean ? At the risk of explaining the obvious—a risk which Scotsmen are said (by

Englishmen) to take very cheerfully—I will explain what it means by repeating what I have already said. It means that had Charles Lamb died a few months earlier than he did (and he died suddenly), the contents of this volume, being one-half of the pseudonymous Elian *Corpus* or Literary Remains, would have been by the first Editors left to nurture the wits of those learned worms which hold high feast and intellectual converse along the shelves where dead and out-of-date magazines stand a-row, propping each other's dust. It means that Talfourd and Moxon would have omitted them, as not coming within the machine-stamped category of his book-published *Works:* that Canon Ainger would have had doubts at first about recognising them officially, and would have ended by placing them somewhere—or rather somewheres, dispersedly—in a subsequent volume or volumes.

Howbeit, the service which Lamb's own immediate friends in England did not render to his memory and to the good cause of the world's profitable pleasure, was rendered at last by a stranger from far away, a citizen of the United States. It was in 1865, and full thirty years after Lamb's death, that Mr J. E. Babson published his memorable volume entitled *Eliana*, with a congenial and enthusiastic Preface, from which I must quote an explanatory paragraph or two.

> For years I have been hopefully and patiently waiting for somebody to collect and publish these scattered and all but forgotten articles of Lamb's; but at last, seeing no likelihood of its being done at present, if ever in my day, and fearing that I might else never have an opportunity of perusing these strangely neglected writings of my favourite author, I commenced the task of searching out and discovering them myself for mine own delectation. And after a deal of fruitless and aimless labour, (for unlike Johannes Scotus Erigena, in his quest of a treatise of Aristotle, I had no oracle to consult,) after spending nearly as many weeks in turning over the leaves of I know not how many volumes of old, dusty, musty, fusty periodicals, as Mr. Vernon ran miles after a butterfly, I was amply rewarded for all my pains; for I

not only found all, or nearly all, of Lamb's uncollected writings that are spoken of in his *Life and Letters*, but a goodly number of articles from his pen which neither he nor his biographer has ever alluded to. As I read these (to me) new essays, poems, and letters of Elia, I could not but feel somewhat indignant that such excellent productions of so excellent a writer should have been "underkept and down suppressed" so long. I was as much ravished with these new-found Essays of Lamb's as good old Nicholas Gerbelius (see Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, partition ii., section 2, member 4) was with a few Greek authors restored to light. If I had had one or two loving, enthusiastic admirers of Charles Lamb to enjoy with me the delight of perusing these uncollected Elias, I should have been "all felicity up to the brim." For with me, as with Michael de Montaigne and Hans Andersen, there is no pleasure without communication; and therefore, partly to please myself, and partly to please the admirers of Elia, I have collected and published all of Charles Lamb's writings that I found "sleeping" in out-of-fashion books and out-of-date periodicals.

To ninety-nine hundredths of their author's readers the contents of this volume will be as good as manuscript; and not only will the contents of *Eliana* be new to most readers, but they will be found to be not wholly unworthy of him who wrote the immortal dissertation on "Roast Pig." Albeit not to be compared with Elia's best and most finished productions, many of the articles in this collection contain some of the finest qualities and peculiarities of his genius; and most of them—especially the essays and sketches—are, as good old Bishop Hall would say, flowered with the blossoms of learning and observation.

The publication of *Eliana* marks an epoch in the little history of what one may call Lamb-scholarship, and separates the generation of Editors who sat in darkness from that of the Editors who have seen the light, whether they have followed it with willing feet or no. Every Editor now perceives, even if some Editors still reluct from, the ideal to which all editing must seek to approximate: namely, the giving to the world a Collection of Lamb's Authentic and Authenticated Writings as complete as can possibly be made, by thankfully taking them wherever they are to be found, and caring more for their authorship than for such irrelevant and external questions as Whether they were published in a book? or How and where they appeared in print?—or whether they appeared in print at all. If they have not appeared in print

hitherto, so much the worse for the Lamb-enthusiast who died yesterday, and so much the better for him who is alive to-day.

But though we seem to have got far enough away from that primitive error of the first Editors—the error of implicitly identifying the extent of a man's proper Authorship with the contents of his Books, and regarding as things abandoned and lifeless those productions of his which had not been in this way formally taken up from the ground by their parent and so publicly adopted, in Roman legal fashion—yet that ancient error has been worth adverting to here, for two cogent present-day reasons. Firstly, because we are not *quite* rid of it yet, or of editorial prepossessions that are traceable to it, as Canon Ainger's meritorious edition—tentative in its beginnings and *selective* in the end—is there to show. Secondly, because out of that first mischief there grew a second one, which has detached itself from the first and persists independently, an anachronism but an influence, penetrating and vitiating the best modern editions. I mean those absurdities—or, to speak a very gentle language, those *inconveniences*—of Arrangement in which the well-known Fitzgerald Edition and the Eversley (Canon Ainger's) Edition do equally abound, though they take their different ways to confusion. Each of these Editors has done good work in this subject, and each has left plenty for less competent men to do : but a cursory inspection of the Tables of Contents of either edition of Lamb's Works will show a state of things for which excuses can be made or reasons elaborated, but which, nevertheless, are not there on any grounds of reason at all, but are simply the un-removed remnants of an abandoned error : the error of basing upon Lamb's books, with their Tables of Contents and their temporary delimitations of this from that, rather than taking the

whole body of his now-collected works—as he himself might have done at the end of a longer lifetime—and placing everything according to a simple scheme controlled by the two considerations of Chronological Order and Inherent Affinity. These essential determinants are equally eliminated when (as in the Fitzgerald and the useful Shepherd Edition) you find Lamb's Poetical Works cut into so many subdivisions that the whole seems rather a collection of labels than a body of poetry; or when, as in the Eversley edition, you have such a strange promiscuity and such an unnatural divorce as have begotten, between them, the reduplicated miscellaneity of the two volumes entitled respectively "Poems, Plays, and Essays," and "Mrs Leicester's School, etc." I have not, in the course of my own reading or handling of books, known anything which had the same befooling and baffling effect as these two volumes continue to exercise upon any one using them, for however long; no instance where at the same time so much was fairly given of the commonly acknowledged work of an English classic writer and yet so much thereof rendered—for purposes of intelligent reference, if not for purposes of casual reading—obscure, inaccessible, an inhabitant of uncertain address, an extant item, if you can only find it, in a bisected chaos: a chaos that is not without method, it is true, but its method a bad one, making for derangement both of works and wits. Enough, however, of these generalities on the two testing merits of an edition, Completeness and Arrangement. Let me now advert briefly to what has been done, or left undone, by the four Editors who, after Talfourd and after Babson, have been most noted in this field of work: namely, Mr W. Carew Hazlitt, Mr Percy Fitzgerald, the late Mr R. H. Shepherd and Canon Ainger.

Priority in the list must be given to Mr Hazlitt

for these two reasons, amongst others: that his services have been greatest, and that the public indebtedness to him is least generally recognised. During close upon forty years he has been giving to the world from time to time, in books and in articles, new information, new views, hitherto unpublished matter, matter hitherto uncollected, or indications where such matter was to be found—the whole constituting, when summed up, a total contribution to our knowledge of Lamb (and especially to our more intimate knowledge of the domestic history of the family, and the character of its different members, Mary Lamb above all) far outweighing what has come to us from the labours of any one Editor, Talfourd alone excepted. If the innocent general reader should ask why, this being so, Mr Hazlitt has not more of a name with the Public, I will hazard the surmise that it is partly because he has so much of a name with the Critics. For some men, alas! are born to Editorship as the sparks fly upward; and in the sequel they will have their place assigned them —not on the score of merit alone, but also by the favour of Fortune and as the destinies decree—in one or other of the two natural divisions of their kind: the Dogs with a Bad Name; and the Other Dogs (*no better*) whose qualities are not so generally discussed and whose reputation remains a secret. Mr Hazlitt got his name—a name for something less than unfailing accuracy—very early; and, for some reasons not readily to be discerned, it has been unanimously passed down the years, and bruited about from street to street of the Critics' Quarter ever since. I believe it is the subject of a standing order or instruction in certain places; that it is always on the mysterious wires that run between the editorial sanctuary in the basement and the invisible Judgment Seat under the roof of the house. So, if Mr Hazlitt is guilty of one

inaccuracy in the course of a volume, there is no critic with any *esprit-de-corps* or knowledge of professional tradition who will not seek till he finds it; and, having found it, he will flourish it like a flame. And in truth Mr Hazlitt has usually left them something to go in search of, if they valued such small findings: there has been at least an occasional inadvertency, a momentary forgetfulness of known historical relations; and the figures of a date have not always been accurately set down. Thus much, I hope, may be said without offence by one who does not know Mr Hazlitt, but who knows and values his work and who perceives, moreover, that Mr Hazlitt himself is very frank about the matter.[1] It is to be added, too, that he has not cared very greatly for form; his books on Lamb have been carelessly constructed (what Lamb would have called *incondite*), desultory, almost gossipy. Thus each has been rather a box containing valuables (which others have made free to abstract with a large hand) than a carven casket, a carefully finished literary work, bespeaking

[1] See "The Lambs," pp. 83–105 *passim*, in which he speaks, with humour rather than remorse or resentment, of the slips of memory, etc. into which he has fallen, and the manner in which he has been entreated thereanent. In regard to this whole subject of minor inaccuracies, let me say that in this field it is particularly easy to leave traces of one's humanity behind one, if only somebody will make a business or a pleasure of gleaning the residue of errors. For instance, Canon Ainger entitles as "Prologue to *Antonio*"—and repeatedly refers to as a *Prologue*—a thing which no one could read intelligently without seeing that it is an Epilogue. Again, he has not troubled, in a quarter of a century, to correct the mis-spelling of a proper name on the first page of his "Life of Lamb." Or, to take a non-invidious instance: the late Alexander Ireland was a most respected bookman, and one of whom folk would say, "He knows more about this subject than any man living." The subject which he "knew about" was the books and the literary lives of Hazlitt, Lamb and Leigh Hunt. Yet his well-known "Bibliography" of these writers is meagre enough—in regard to Lamb, ludicrously so—and I have found that in certain sections it teems with errors of a kind for which the estimable author might justly have been strung as high as Haman.

an individual estimation and enduring by its own charm. But when all such critical deductions have been made, this net truth remains: that whoever be "the ideal editor of Lamb" (and I do not believe that wonder is yet born), the man who, among living specialists, has done most to make possible the display of those future perfections of management and comprehension—the man who has deserved most thanks, though not, in every sense, most praise—is neither Canon Ainger nor another, but W. Carew Hazlitt, albeit his name is associated with no authoritative edition of Lamb's Collected Works. As for those inadvertencies of detail aforesaid, and those teasing little accidents of the press, their apology, or their extenuating plea, was duly entered on the record long ago by one who foresaw and would certainly have sympathised: "What does Elia care for dates—or Peter either?"

A remark in the penultimate sentence above must be qualified by a reference to the Fitzgerald Edition, to which I now pass. In its inception this was an edition prepared by Mr Hazlitt for the firm of publishers which succeeded to the business of Edward Moxon, and which continued to trade for some years under a modification of the old style and title. At the stage of sending in "copy," an unfortunate difference of opinion arose between editor and publishers on the delicate question of payment; as to whether it was to be *then* or later. After a few exchanges of lay remark, there was the abrupt apparition of a lawyer's letter—whereupon the firm at once remitted a cheque, but also took Mr Hazlitt's half-finished job entirely out of his hands and placed it in the hands of a stranger: the late Mr George Augustus Sala, then a much younger man, and less well-known, than he was at a later time. The edition, to which Mr Hazlitt claims that he had

contributed new material, came out without his name (which may have been hard on him), but also without the benefit of his first corrections or his second thoughts—which was not very fair to Lamb or to the public. As an offset to these disadvantages, it contained an "Essay on the Genius of Charles Lamb" by Mr Sala. In subsequent years this edition was re-issued under other editorial auspices, with new editorial essays on the "Genius," etc. of its subject. But how much besides essay-writing was done by one and another of these gentlemen we may infer from the words of Mr Fitzgerald, the final sponsor (in 1875) for this vicissitudinous piece of book-making: "The present edition will be found the most complete that has yet been offered to the public, *and is certainly the first that has claims to being styled 'edited.'*" I have placed half of this sentence in italics, for future use. Mr Fitzgerald's claim on the score of completeness was very well founded for that time, and in some respects he had certainly taken trouble with his work. Besides recovering a number of pieces for the first time (dramatic criticisms from the "Examiner"), he fused the prefatory and connecting matter in Talfourd's edition of the *Letters* and the *Final Memorials*, so as to make a continuous narrative; virtually a new (and yet old) "Life of Charles Lamb by Talfourd, with extensive additions and notes by Percy Fitzgerald." This was an extremely useful service, and under some such title as the above the book can now be bought separately, I believe. But having separated Talfourd's running commentary from the text of the *Letters*, Mr. Fitzgerald could not well leave the latter in their original order. So, besides rejoining the parts of those which Talfourd had given in fragments (a bit at a time, in his first and second books), he re-arranged the whole, so to say, in packets addressed to different persons: all the

letters to Coleridge coming together, all the letters to Manning coming together, and so on—obviously a service of very doubtful utility indeed! With this, and the providing of some useful Notes and an excellent Index, the tale of Mr Fitzgerald's editorial virtues ends. It is now my more pleasing and legitimate task to speak of his shortcomings.

Something has been indicated already, and I may say in few words that the term "Arrangement" does not seem to have existed for Mr Fitzgerald in 1875, or even in 1886. And yet in a sense there is in this edition *classification* and to spare—enough, almost, to furnish out the needs of a library catalogue. For here you have, besides the two *Elia* series, such others as "Miscellaneous Essays," "Letters," "Sketches, Ephemeral Papers, etc.," "Contributions to Hone's Every Day Book," "Criticisms," "Reviews," "Letters to the Editor." There is not room in this Preface to unfold all that is hidden under these descriptive headings; suffice it to know that among the "Ephemeral Papers" is one which was so far from being ephemeral that it was published four times in the course of twenty years, appearing finally in the *Elia* series. The things that are described as "Letters," again, are the contributions to Hunt's *Reflector:* Essays ranging from the manner of Steele to that of Sir Thomas Browne, and having in their character as little of the "letter"—except that they begin with a *Sir* and end with an epistolary form of leave-taking—as the *Dissertation upon Roast Pig*. What is worse is that these various little bundles of Lamb's Essay-work are pitched about into different volumes, as if to fill the interstitial spaces left by such larger pieces as the "Tales" or the "Dramatic Works." On just this principle does your expert in domestic removals turn to account the else-vacant regions in a well-packed

furniture-van. And talking of "Dramatic Works": one is staggered to see the little prose tale *The Defeat of Time* calendared in the Contents of Volume V. as belonging to that division. This is a slip, for the tale is not so absurdly placed in the body of the book. But that very important dramatic work *The Wife's Trial* is not named in the Contents; and looking further, you find that it is not in the volume at all. It is charitable to suppose that the Editor had forgotten it—rather, it is impossible to *believe* that he can have deliberately intended from the first to bury it among the "Poems" in another volume—so far from home, poor thing, with "Criticisms," "Sketches, Ephemeral Writings, etc.," "Contributions," and other such series lying like mountain-chains or Sierras between it and the place where it would be! Not to multiply instances of the things which give a book "claims to being styled *edited*," I may mention that wherever Lamb quotes an illustrative passage in his famous review of Wordsworth's "Excursion," Mr Fitzgerald gives you the first line and a reference to the page! If you can be sure of the edition he refers to, and can come by a copy of it, you will know *exactly* where to begin in each case, and can stop where you like. Thus strangely does a second era of editorial animosity—of extirpating zeal—break upon this ill-fated Essay: Mr Fitzgerald slicing new cantles of its living meaning out of that which Gifford had mangled and made meaningless enough, according to the bitter cry of its poor author, some ninety years ago. Finally, one more characteristic touch which gives Mr Fitzgerald's work its peculiar claim to be styled edited, must be mentioned, for I doubt whether anything quite so curious could be set beside it. Mr Fitzgerald gives, of the Tales from Shakespeare, only those which were written by Charles Lamb, omitting those which

were written by Mary. In this he is within his rights, though he might have acted otherwise and not been so far wrong. But also of the charming Preface to that book he gives only a fragment, *beginning mysteriously with a relative pronoun in the middle of a sentence.* Why? Because, forsooth, Lamb happens to have recorded a momentary incident of the workshop in regard to this composition—happens to have told Wordsworth how Mary was writing this beautiful piece of prose, and how at a certain point she failed, or thought she must fail, and could nowise finish it in that fashion—and how he had just *there* taken the pen from her hand and carried the composition to the close which she intended. And so Mr Fitzgerald in turn takes pen in hand, carefully strikes out all that preceded that delimitary "which," and just *there* he will have the Reader begin, and make what he can of it. Surely this intrusive splitting of the *letter* in a case where the *spirit* alone imported or could be an object of quest for any reader—and where that spirit was already fully present in the beginning or could not else have been so fitly delivered in the close—surely this spilling of the *wine* in order to divide the *bottle* justly—must stand a fairly solitary instance in the annals of editing, as it is done outside of Laputa!

Of the late Richard Herne Shepherd it is saying no ill to opine that, energetic and capable literary man as he was, his qualifications were those of a bibliographer rather than a critic; and this distinction gives its character both to the positive and the negative side of the account as regards his services in the present field. It is a pleasure to be able to say that the positive account—what stands to his credit and leaves us his debtors—is very large; and at the same time it is possible to have two opinions as to whether the negative account was so negative after all,

whether it was not also a positive gain to us, though it resulted from a mistaken reasoning on his part. I am referring now to the liberty he took in dealing with the *Elia* essays—overleaping the landmarks set by Lamb himself between the first hurried finishings of these Essays for the month's magazine and that more deliberate judgment of them, and pruning, and final approval, which he exercised when preparing them for publication in book form. Mr Shepherd, working late in the nineteenth century, thought that after such a lapse of time it was quite legitimate to set aside the motives—emotions of a momentary delicacy and endurance, he supposed them to be, nice respect for the feelings of living men—which had prompted Lamb to cut out this and that small portion from various of these Essays: and so in preparing his edition of Lamb's works, although he based upon the two volumes of 1823 and 1833 for his text of the *Elia* essays, yet he went back to the first magazine form for their *contents* and restored whatever passages Lamb had struck out. In judging of the editorial ethics here involved, it is right, I think, to keep apart the premises and the inference of Mr Shepherd's argument. There are those who would say out of hand that even granting the premises—granting that Lamb's motives for retouching or retrenching his own published works had that accidental and personal sanction and no other—were the momentary concessions made by the mere mortal then living to other mere mortals of his acquaintance who are now dead—even then, these would say, the act was wrong, disturbing cherished associations, outraging established sanctities etc. Much upon these topics could be pronounced, to which all but the criminal and soulless would listen with a bowed head. I should listen with avidity and sympathy myself, but I am not sure that I should not end by

casting my vote in support of Mr Shepherd : *if his premises were correct*. But they are not correct : they are as wrong as they can be.

I have said that Mr Shepherd was a bibliographer rather than a critic. As such he was not always alive to the difference between the Writer and the Genius, between the driven Author of an occasional article just written, and the absolute Artist to whom author and article will be equally accidental and external things a few hours hence ; and to the subtler motives determining the greater character, he was, I think, consequently a little impercipient. The explanation he gives for Lamb's retrenchings is one which is understandable by everybody, it is true, readers or non-readers ; but that it fails to account for the fact in a majority of the instances becomes apparent, I think, as soon as we look into those restorations. No personal feelings were likely to be hurt by the footnote to *Oxford in the Vacation*, wherein Lamb declares that there is something to him repugnant or disillusioning about the look of a literary work in its manuscript stage, and that even Milton reads *raw* to him unless read in print : or in the footnote to *Sarah Battle's Opinions on Whist*, in which he exclaims concerning the alarming effect of a cinder falling noisily on a fenderless hearthstone while a game is in progress : and other cases still more remote from any possible personal application. We must look for the reason elsewhere, and we need not go far ; we have only to re-read the context *with* and then *without* the abandoned passage and then acknowledge that the change was for the better, that the curtailment or excision relieved and integrated and enhanced the function and effect of the whole. It has been said that the artist is known by what he leaves out, and this is twice true. For in proportion as he is an artist, a connoisseur and seeker of the

absolute form—of the vital expression, which is the only one that is expression at all for him—he will never value the thing that he has written *because* he has written it, but will look at it, when the time comes, with alien and impartial eyes: seeing in it only an attempt to approximate, a hit or a miss, where the misses count nothing and the hits must be few. In surrendering the misses, he is surrendering nothing that counts, that has reality or speaks at all to him. Hence the artist is magnanimous—heroic, stoical it might seem—in emendation: he feels no pain, he is cutting no portion out of his own soul, nor sacrificing the innocent child Isaac anew, in running a blue pencil through paragraphs and pages of most excellently written copy—copy in which, it may be, he had great happiness such a little while ago! And besides the detachment, or the magnanimity in surrender, of which he is capable—and which a merely moral man, earnest and humble, might emulate in the course of composition, without greatly bettering the prospects of the work in hand—he has, as artist, that steady intuition of perfection which is the touchstone of his sense, and tells him what things are false, and must be made true, what things are surplusage, and must be removed. Nor will he grudge to remove them because he sees they are good things—a bewilderingly clever point, or an excessive joke, or an inundation of gratuitous vivacity—for he sees that the good thing is a bad thing if it would be better somewhere else. It was, then, undoubtedly under the direction of his artistic sense—under which his humane or social or friendly sense may, to be sure, have been subsumed as a minor category, a lesser sanction, prompting him, for instance, to omit certain communications regarding the early life of George Dyer, as perhaps not fair, that is to say, not beautiful, *nicht schön*—it was, nevertheless, under the direction

of his authoritative literary and artistic sense that Lamb gave those veritable last touches of perfection to the *Elia* essays when preparing them for re-publication in 1823 and 1833. Only then did he really finish them, to a degree of finish which he gave to nothing else. And it was amazingly little that he had to do: a perceptible crudeness—a jutting of the raw material—here to be chipped away, a chisel mark there, a little dust of the marble to be blown softly from that perfect round—and the carven beauty of his work stood accomplished, without flaw. Everything—to change the figure a little—was now consonant with the dignity, the remoteness, the almost impersonality of Elia, a timeless being in a book of the ages. This effect of unity, and distance, and a charmed stillness, is broken in upon and destroyed when you restore, say, the unwieldy train of surplus anecdotage and postscript irrelevance which loaded and lamed in its ending the essay *On the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis*—an extreme example, this, of flagrant intrusion, of unseasonable ebullition; a rapscallion irruption of the mere quotidian mortal Charles Lamb into the piece—meant for better than the likes of him—which, forsooth, the fellow had written! But *securus judicat orbis terrarum;* and the artist's judgment also is sure, having the same character of universality, being in the same way a balance of innumerable comprehensions. For this reason the thing which is fully valid and vital for him can hardly fail of being valid and vital for all men in all time, if only he has accepted it in the full energy of his honour and his powers. But that may not in every case be; for the diviner faculties of men, like the gods themselves, are not always operative, or indeed fully awake. But Charles Lamb was, as artist, very fully awake when, twice only in his lifetime, he went critically over his passed and printed magazine-work; and finding here

and there a dispensable passage—an instance of merely personal excessiveness or unrestraint, heavily significant of some trivial momentary inspiration, or emphasis, or gratuitous sub-intention of the writer—he quietly obliterated it, as he would have dealt with an impertinent private mark on a public memorial. Such things had no right to be there, in his more deliberate judgment, merely on the score that *he* had written them, if they were a fault, if they belonged not to the subject but to the subjectivity. And that subjectivity showing—in the case I have spoken of and in other cases—as an intolerable over-muchness, he cut it out as though it had been a corruption of his text.

The verdict, then, of the critical courts must go against Mr Shepherd, with the extenuating circumstance attached, that what may have been somewhat heinous in an editor might at the same time be no small merit in a bibliographer. And the bibliographer also serves, even if he is little apt to stand and wait. In other words—however imperfect and insufficiently considered Mr Shepherd's way of regarding these things may seem to one, and although the habit of restoring erasures in a classic is not to be encouraged, yet it is possible to acknowledge that, in the actual case, some thanks are due, and that what was done on a mischievous and mistaken principle of editing was, after all, a useful piece of work, for which other editors, and a large body of readers besides, may be grateful. It is, to say the least, quite as interesting—and for ordinary purposes much more useful—to have an edition of Lamb which gives the first published form of the famous *Elia* essays as it is to have an exact reprint of a Shakespeare folio or quarto ; for reference rather than for reading, perhaps, and a little also in the behoof of sentimental interest and curiosity.

Apart from this controversial matter of the *Elia* essays, however, Mr Shepherd was meritorious and

happy in his editing. He had, indeed, the greatest merit and happiness of all; for *this* Shepherd did go in search of the Lambs that were lost, and achieved the most signal and perilous rescue in the annals of that quest—bringing back, not an hour too soon, one that had been astray in the desert for almost three-quarters of a century and that was supposed by all the world to have long since gone over a precipice into unsearchable oblivion. This was the work of Charles and Mary Lamb called "Poetry for Children," which was published in two small volumes in 1809 and had an immediate success; but which, not having been reprinted, became *introuvable* pretty early in Charles's literary lifetime, and, as he himself once said, "was not to be had for love nor money." The book, with reproductions of its original illustrations and with numerous others newly designed, will form a separate volume of this edition, and in the Prefatory Note to that volume the story of its recovery, for which there is not room here, will be more fully told. Suffice it to say that but for Mr Shepherd's most timely and urgent canvassing of the question as to what had become of that work, it is more than likely that the chances of the next few years would have finally obliterated the solitary copies which had—through we know not what "strange vicissitude"—weathered their way down the century thus far. For the rest, Mr Shepherd's edition compares more than favourably with any edition published up to the present time, both in regard to Completeness and Arrangement. It did not come within his scheme to deal with the "Letters"; and of the books which were joint works of Charles and Mary, he gave (except in the case of "Poetry for Children") only Charles's own contribution. On the other hand, no authenticated line of Lamb's work known to him was omitted; and indeed one piece was accepted by

him as to the authenticity of which I feel myself to be, at this moment of writing, not a little doubtful.

But while his arrangement of the Essays and Miscellaneous Prose-Work was broadly good, if not quite faultless in detail, he left the "Poems" (as I have already indicated) in the confusion in which he found them. Let me give one instance of what this means. Under the general heading of "Fragments" are grouped seven pieces of verse which, the reader at once sees, are not fragments at all, but completed compositions of varying length, both in blank verse and in rhyme. Were he to ask, wonderingly, why they are so misleadingly described, the editorial answer would be that the author described them so: which would seem to close the question. But let him persist, child-like, in keeping the question open and now ask *why* the author described them so—and he will be on the way to learn something which explains the mystery and abolishes the description. For as a fact these pieces, and a little group of sonnets, were contributed by Lamb in 1797, in the first grey and dubious dawn of his literary endeavours, to a joint volume of Poems by his friends Coleridge and Lloyd. What we know of his state of mind at that time, as shown in his letters, justifies one in saying that the title *Fragments* was no more than an effect of shyness and modesty in the solitary and rather sore-hearted young poet—an expression seeming to deprecate any individual estimation of these poor pieces of his, these mere trifles—still more to deprecate comparisons with "the Greater Ajax" and his friend Lloyd, both of whom he looked upon as more of the world, more of the literary world, and in every sense more accomplished and professional than he. One sees it all, and it is very touching; with the vain and sensitive modesty of youth. At this moment, too, Lamb considered that he had bidden farewell to Poetry—

indeed, he made that farewell almost declaratory and public in his Dedication of these very poems to his "best Friend and Sister"—and so we may take it that the word had for himself a supplementary meaning and a secret accent of regret, referring as it did to these poor memorials, little, but very dear to his heart, of a young ambition so early abandoned and a poetic career (*a poetic career!*) broken off in its beginnings. Howbeit, though the word might bear those meanings at the moment and for the author, those meanings are not on the surface for the general reader of Lamb—nor, to confess a truth, have they been thought worth detecting and bringing out by closer students of the ground hitherto—so that the traditional marking-off of those pieces from other groups in the editions up till 1884, and the labelling them as "Fragments," could only produce an unintended and confusing effect: converting into a distinction *within* the body of a man's own works that which was meant, momentarily, to suggest a distinction *between* his works as a whole and those of other men, imputed to be of more consideration. As it is read to-day, the term neither carries its own reason with it, nor explains anything else. It has survived its function and is, in a word, only *so much type* continually re-set, after the meaning has run out of it. But just because it is so typical, in all senses, has this single instance of irrational arrangement and designation been worth commenting on at such length here. For holding its place, as it does, in the work of an energetic, innovating, and somewhat heterodox Editor like Mr Shepherd, it illustrates the more strikingly how powerful the principle of inertia, the principle of mere persistence, has been in the whole history of Lamb-editing: with what slowness, and how fragmentarily, a bit here and a bit there, the simple and obvious right thing to do has got

itself done, a little by this man and a little by that.

The next little was done by Canon Ainger, who comes last in this list as being in a way latest, and also because that has been the position of honour and emphasis in a long sentence, time out of mind. The emphasis, indeed, is no greater than the occasion demands; for Canon Ainger's little has somehow been transformed—by the casual and imitative testimony of many careless voices—into an unconscionable magnitude of imputed merit, specialism, official authority, almost of exclusive proprietorship in subject of Charles Lamb. In truth, the dispropotionate recognition which has rewarded the efforts of this last labourer in a long task—in an essentially cumulative and co-operative work—might beget a train of curious speculation, leading pretty far from the matter in hand and into many departments of life. For myself, it has led me to surmise that in the story of Aaron's rod only half of the miracle has really been recorded: and I now believe that not only was the rod of Aaron no more miraculous-looking than the other rods at first, but also that the serpent into which it changed was itself no bigger than any of the other serpents—and yet it had the credit and pleasure of swallowing them all, every living stick. Even so is Canon Ainger credited with having done unto all the good men that went before him, and more also. For whereas it is generally allowed that even if there were no kings previous to Agamemnon there certainly have been some since (so that he was by no means the first and last individual of a genus), there is a current assumption that the Eversley Edition is not only the first good, but also the "ideal" and "final" edition of Lamb, and that the whole subject is a specialism in the sole custody of its Editor. And the general reader may well think that this is so; for

when he turns to any of the accepted books of reference for information about Charles Lamb, he is everywhere confronted by Canon Ainger. If he is dissatisfied with the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, in which Canon Ainger presents the subject, he may betake him to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, where Canon Ainger again presents it. If he retreats upon the fresher and more democratic and intellectual *Chambers*, he will find an article which, for what is in it, might have been written by anybody. But it is by Canon Ainger; and is followed by a Bibliographical Note, in which Canon Ainger's edition alone is mentioned. This monotony of ownership would have bored Lamb terribly, I am afraid, for he was as apt to get tired of the old familiar faces as anybody else. And yet, to be quite just, it may have served him more than is at once apparent, and, by satisfying a particular foible of the British mind, has probably helped, more than anything in our day, to secure for his works their proper rank and recognition as a national possession. For the British mind is curiously intolerant of equality, except "before the law." In all other relations, its eye craves perspectives of importance; rather, a height and a depth, an apex and a base; especially an apex. One might almost say that it cannot think comfortably on a subject at all—cannot believe that the subject substantially exists—unless it can think of some one man who is the accepted authority, the *respectable* name, in that subject. But when this is given it, the British mind knows where it is; and stays there like a rock. Consequently, these ascriptions of exclusive specialism, of literary proprietorship, have a national function and utility which neutralise, in our esteem, the sense of their invidiousness. And, happily, in the forming of these special reputations, as in the building of a planetary world, it is wonderful what a small amount of solid

matter, or initial merit, will serve as nucleus to begin from; gravitation doing the rest in one case, and what Dr Johnson called "re-percussion by idiots" in the other. In the case of Canon Ainger one may say (and I do not say it in any invidious sense, though I can scarcely hope to escape that charge) that the fact of his having written the volume on Lamb in the *English Men of Letters* Series has been decisive; the originating point of these ascriptions of ownership; the supreme sanction in favour of the gratulatory tone in which the Eversley Edition is customarily referred to by the well-meaning inexperts of the general press: this, more even than the great prestige of the Publisher's name. But if we set aside such adventitious circumstances, and rid ourselves of the prepossessions begotten of them, looking indifferently at the Eversley Edition as though it bore the imprint say, not of Macmillan, but of Slark—then, I think, this is what we should find: a fair-minded and informed man, doing it justice against the grain of a conscious grudge (as I try to do myself), would surely own that it has its merits and has performed a real and very considerable service, marking, upon the whole, an advance; an equally fair-minded and informed man, even biassed a little towards the defence, would have to admit that this edition is a very teasing contrivance indeed, and that it has some original sins of its own which are peculiarly worthy of damnation.

Canon Ainger's great merit as an Editor is that he has been the first to bring out the autobiographical aspect and meanings of Lamb's works, and has brought the general reader into a more intimate acquaintance with the social and other relations of the man behind the author. This is, upon the whole, the outstanding character of the Eversley Edition; and is what must result if one is at any pains at all to annotate Lamb. And the painstaking need not be great;

because for nearly every passage in Lamb that needs elucidation the sidelight can be found within his own works: in some other passage of an essay, or a poem, or a letter of his. Outside of these, and a few obvious source-books, Canon Ainger has rarely troubled to go, and is sometimes silent where we should expect an ideal annotator to make a useful remark. But he has had, also, the further and signal merit of being the first to arrange Lamb's Poems in chronological order. It would be difficult to exaggerate the value of this service. It increased notably the significance of fifty per cent., at least, of our author's lesser poems, and gave a unity of biographic reference to them all—making into a recognisable body of poetry what had hitherto appeared in the editions as only a miscellaneous collection of occasional pieces. The fact that anybody might easily have done this, any time those fifty years preceding 1884, nowise lessens the merit and originality of Canon Ainger's editorial act. For no other Editor troubled to do it; and perhaps no other Editor saw how well worth doing it was.

The regards in which the Eversley Edition is, to say the least, less excellent, are two: a Misarrangement of Contents that is ill-founded in reason and makes for trouble; and an exercise of Selection, almost of moral Censorship, on the part of the Editor, by which, it may be, Canon Ainger has offended more readers than he has hindered Lamb from giving offence to.

As to the first matter, it is only fair to say that Canon Ainger has proceeded (or meant to proceed), not carelessly, but on a clearly-stated principle: "When a writer has himself chosen for the people 'of his best,' that *best* should be at least kept separate from matter of less worth. Acting on [this] principle, I have left for a concluding volume (should it be

called for), those slighter prose essays and *jeux d'esprit* which have been collected of late years, and entitled not, I think, very felicitously, *Eliana*." This sounds very right and reasonable. But one must join issue as to the facts, and deny that Lamb ever did, in any deliberate way or in any comprehensive sense, "choose for the people 'of his best.'" Apart from the *Elia* essays, which are the Works of Elia, he only once made a collection of Charles Lamb's Works. *That was in the distant antiquity of* 1818; a period when, indeed, he had done one or two unmatched pieces of work, but a period, nevertheless, anterior to his fame, and anterior to those years, from 1820 onwards, in which he had the recognition, the consciousness, the confidence, and to some extent the working habits, of one who ranks among the eminent and accepted professional writers of his time. Thus when Canon Ainger implicitly makes Lamb's proper *Works* consist of the *Elia* essays and the matter in prose and verse which appeared in the Collection of 1818, and brands everything subsequent to that date (if only it did not fit into the *Elia* series, or if, perhaps, there was not convenient room for it there) as something "slighter" and negligible—he is doing a very extraordinary thing and, to buttress the perilous act, affirming a critical judgment which will not bear a moment's investigation. It is nowise true that the body of Essays which has been drawn together, from this quarter and from that, since Lamb's death, is of slighter character than what appeared in the edition of 1818, one qualification only being made. If we leave out of the balance the two great essays, on Shakespeare's Tragedies and on Hogarth (which are unmatched for originality and power, not only elsewhere in Lamb's works, but in all English literature in that kind), then there is scarce a piece (I am talking of prose-pieces, Essay-work) in the author's

early Collection, against which you cannot produce another from the Editors' Collections that shall balance or outweigh it. And if in one pair the advantage, the weight of merit, was found to lie with the earlier work (as it would with the article *On Burial Societies*, for one case), in the next it would as indisputably lie with the later sample. Nay more; I will venture to say—always leaving out those twin pillars of greatness, the *Shakespeare* and the *Hogarth* essays—that taking both collections in bulk, the Essays which have been collected first and last, from Babson's day till now, constitute a body of work by Charles Lamb which is *twice as important* as the handful of lesser essays (some of them slight enough) which appeared in the publication of 1818. Yet to these latter Canon Ainger gives a precedence and rank, an *excluding* superiority and importance, like, for all the world, the topsy-turvy absurdities which result from primogeniture in high-placed British families. For this sacred cause, and to keep the greater things from all contact with the lesser, he has been willing to perplex the English-speaking world with those two volumes—his second and his third, each of them an indefinite mixture of multifarious prose and verse—which I have already likened to a bisected chaos, in my great effort to speak of them politely. To speak of them no more, however, and not to prove, as one easily might, that there is almost as little logic or consistency observed in the application of Canon Ainger's guiding "principle" as there was right reason in his adoption of it at all—let me pass to that second fault of his, which, whether due to imperfect sympathy with his subject, or imperfect loyalty to Lamb in the presence of other temptations, makes it one's duty (I speak only for myself) to regard the Eversley Edition with a degree of fanatical unfriendliness, far beyond that ordinary quiet ill-will

and envy which one naturally feels towards the esteemed work of a favoured predecessor.

Lamb seldom expressed contempt; but I think there is a fine contempt in his voice, rather than humour or even disgust, in a passage where he says, "I am become an indecent character." This in later days, and in allusion to more modern delicacies of feeling that were shocked (so publishers assured him) by an early work of his—"Rosamund Gray"—so remarkable for nothing as for an almost painful and disastrous purity pervading it. Canon Ainger does not say that Lamb is an indecent character; but he has permitted his edition to be influenced by a personal or sectional ideal of taste which is not the taste of Charles Lamb, nor, if one may say so without offence, that of a layman. The Canon strikes one as being (what indeed it well becomes a Canon to be) fastidious, "right-thinking," seemly *à outrance;* and, in another sense than the ordinary one, "awfully decent." Lamb was none of these things, certainly not *à outrance;* and even the imperative virtue of decency he could wear, at suitable times, with a magnanimous difference. Such a disparity of moral gifts seems ominous of "imperfect sympathy" ahead, if not of a rupture of collaboration between Editor and Author. And as a fact we find that Canon Ainger discriminates; and even permits himself, at certain points, to cut the Author's text according to the Editor's taste. Not to speak of certain little biblical references which he has struck out of the Dibdin Letters, for instance—things very far from even a colourable charge of impiety, though they might have seemed to be touched with an unbecoming levity had they appeared, say, in a published letter by Canon Ainger himself—he excludes from Lamb's Works altogether a number of excellent pieces which the world will, I fancy, by no means consent to let die.

He excludes a Farce entitled *The Pawnbroker's Daughter*, though it was good enough for Lamb, and for "Blackwood's Magazine," and is an excellent example of that artificial and motiveless dramatic convention which Lamb liked so much and expounded so well; and though it is, moreover, full of points of interest for the faithful student. A child's tale, *The Defeat of Time*, as charming a piece of prose, in its particular vein, as Lamb ever wrote, is also consigned to oblivion by the Canon, on what rules I cannot guess. He says it was unfinished, which is no reason, even if it were correct, which I hold it is not. One suspects a decided distaste for the subject to have dictated the exclusion of *Cupid's Revenge*, though this paraphrase of Beaumont and Fletcher's tragedy is one of Lamb's longest pieces of prose and was written avowedly for children, just as the "Tales from Shakspeare" were. Distaste of another kind—a personal distaste for low life and sordid, or painfully drab, characters—has more to do, one cannot help thinking, with the exclusion of *The Reminiscences of Juke Judkins* than the fact that the thing remains a fragment. "Hyperion," for that matter, remains a fragment; and people used to speak of "Paradise Regained" as an unfinished poem. As far as it goes, *Juke Judkins* is complete enough to have great value, and would rank highly as a finished Character Sketch if it were merely so entitled and so read. I am not sure that Lamb has anywhere else performed such a feat of psychological construction, of creation and inner sustenance of a character, as distinguished from the *description* of one looked at from without. However, Canon Ainger has decreed that that shall go for nothing, and that this piece must perish, for all its subtlety and humour. *Unitarian Protests*, again, is a paper in which Elia upbraids the folk of that theological persuasion for their miserable habit of

conforming so far as to have themselves married according to the ritual of the Established Church (for the sake of legalising their offspring) and then acquitting their consciences by handing in a written protest against the doctrines which they have been forced, in a sense, to appear as subscribing to. He tells them they ought manfully to accept all risks (imputation of bastardy, loss of inheritance) even as the Quakers did for a time, and so, by showing that they have stomach for a fight to the death, win for themselves the victory of civil freedom: not to perpetuate a powerful evil by lending it the support of a fictional conformity on the most important day of their lives. *This little contribution to controversy is not admitted into the Eversley Edition.* To be sure, the disabilities which it discusses have long been removed, so that the paper has little of what is nowadays called actuality. Nevertheless, it is a work of Charles Lamb, and an issue from his character; and in it he has expressed his own conviction of the rightful sovereignty of Conscience over all other considerations whatever, with a deliberation and emphasis which were unusual with him, and which we can ill afford to have smuggled out of our ken and quietly passed through a back-door into oblivion.

Finally, "A Vision of Horns." Here is an Essay which even I could scarcely claim a place for—in that edition. Canon Ainger says it is on "an unsavoury subject." That may be, since there is no wise disputing about tastes, whether in the article of literary conceits or other made dishes. But unsavoury or no, the subject is a pretty universal one, as all literature testifies, to say nothing of the lesser literature of unprinted quip and joke, which has always had its currency, its proper moments, in the intercourse of the frank-natured and the pure, women not always being out of the company, nor always of the

lowest class. It is a subject—this of the attribute or addition, symbolised as certain external, albeit usually invisible, frontal ornamentations, which many a good fellow is believed to wear, unconscious of his honours, and owing the same less to his own merit than to the selective enterprise, the extravagant and, so to say, extra-domiciliary kindness of his modest helpmate—it is a subject which, somehow, is felt to be genial and endeared, curiously cognate to humanity and good-humour, when both are sound enough at heart to indulge safely in a spice of pleasant malice. This unsavoury subject was Shakespeare's prime favourite among all good jokes. To it would his wholesome and happy mind revert, how often ! to rest there for the space of a smile, at least, and sometimes long enough for a full, oceanic commotion of mirth, a perfected soul-delivery of Falstaffian laughter. The spirit of Lamb had been drenched in that sunny sea of Shakespearian naturalism and elemental purity of regard, and it is small wonder that he had some motions of his own one day to prolong the ripple of that secular, but that in an especial sense Elizabethan *joyeuseté*. He had not, however, reckoned with the Victorian era, then coming on.

Nay, already in his own day he had miscalculated the moral comprehension and the magnanimity of some who were to read him. No sooner had the "Vision of Horns" appeared, than he found that two dear friends were hurt, as though the reading of it had gored their innocent breasts: a lady, and a Quaker poet. The lady was unmarried, and the Quaker a poet of very small parts, which goes far to account for it. But they were good human souls both, and Lamb was sorry he had hurt them: "heartily, i' faith, heartily." Like the kind fellow he was, he hastened to say so; and perhaps he felt a little resentment himself against a joke that had

served him so ill, that had come off so poorly as to need a defence. What needed defence was, of course, not the joke, but the stupidity of his critics; but he was too good a fellow, I repeat, to maintain that in his own cause, though he would have maintained it gallantly in the cause of any other writer, living or dead. He says once that we ought, even in our recognition or praise of merit, to be modest for a modest man; and he himself, assuredly, could be sensitive for a sensitive one, making some concessions to the obtuseness or the silliness of the head where he respected the honest goodness of the heart. The clamant moral pain of those good folk, therefore, caused him pain in turn, because he felt that he had caused it; and in his sympathy with their pained narrowness he allowed himself to be surprised out of possession of his own larger and essentially purer point of view. So far good, and very generous of him. But when Canon Ainger turns this magnanimous surrender to such extreme account as to say that Lamb "confessed himself thoroughly ashamed" of this little work "which it would have cut him to the quick to think might be permanently associated with his name"—one can only wish, in all charity and brotherliness, that truthful men would observe such moderation in their phrases as not to o'erleap the fact and unwittingly fall o' the other side of their own character. "Thoroughly ashamed" is a kind of phraseology which ought not to be directed, however obliquely, towards a man of Lamb's genius and gentleness by anybody above the rank of a parish beadle. I take leave, too, to deny the fact, and the understanding reader will, I think, agree with me. For he will know, if he is at all familiar with the extraordinary mobility and adaptation, the infinite tactfulness and close-fitting personal understanding and sympathy, and the unfailing good-heartedness of

intention that are ever at play in Lamb's letters—he will know with how large an allowance for the mood and the moment and the kindness of the man we must read his replies to the astonished and grieved Miss Hutchinson and Mr Bernard Barton. At the most, we may say he wished he had not written it; for their silly sakes, since it hurt them; and for his own, since it had been turned into a cause of annoyance to him, and the bother of letter-writing about it. But to say roundly that Lamb was "thoroughly ashamed" is to say that he had done something shameful. To the exact thinker, the idea is absurd; and the demonstration of its absurdity is contained in Lamb's works *passim*, especially in his essay *On the Artificial Comedy of Last Century*, which does not say all that might be said against such criticism, yet says enough, one would have thought, to have kept it silent. And very strange it is, that he should have fallen a victim in his own day, and been sacrificed anew in ours, to that Idol whose hollowness he had exposed so thoroughly, and against whose oppressions he had protested with so full a heart. I mean the Idol of the Impertinent Standard—the Moral Judgment permitting itself to be active out of its sphere and to read commonplace consequences and next-door applications into sheerly neutral, joyous things, fantastical, aerial, and remote. But so do the children of this world make life a burden to those who were sent to them to ease their load. It seems hard that because Canon Ainger and Miss Hutchinson and Mr Bernard Barton are virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale for the rest of us, and that ginger is henceforth forbidden to be hot in the mouth. Very hard, I say, that a Lamb, or a Shakespeare, exercising the franchise of his secular and sympathetic genius, may not venture to regard with a merry twinkle of the inward eye the thought (the *cosmic* thought) of Female

Naughtiness and Good Men Befooled by the cunning of their sweet wives—regard it, mind you, merely as an indifferent and supposable, perhaps a probable and known situation, in the entrancing Human Comedy —but forthwith Mr Bernard Barton and Canon Ainger and Miss Hutchinson must come upon him with their personal grievance, their offended nostrils, their action of battery, their claims for moral and intellectual damage!

The faithful Reader—in whose perspicacity I have the greatest confidence—will not ask why I have made so many words about one small matter, instead of passing on. For he will have noticed that I am all the time talking of the same matter, never really changing the topic; and that in the foregoing paragraphs, though I appear to have been criticising Canon Ainger and saying that I disagree with him, I have been all the time saying something about Charles Lamb, and how he is to be taken: which is the proper occupation of an Editor. And he will have guessed, also, already, from the discussion of this case of "The Vision," the ground on which I am likely to come to rest: namely, of accepting as good enough for us to read, if we are good enough for the privilege, whatever was good enough for Lamb to write, and for his friends, who were quite respectable men, to print for him. Not necessarily to admire, without discrimination, as if everything were equal to his best; but to accept liberally, as an intuitive item, a flitting aspect, a moment's monument, a sidelight thrown upon a Character which, in its total play of moods and compass of qualities, will be found to be always original, honest, lovable, endeared: and that even if a momentary morbidity, an obsessèdness, were anywhere to be detected in his writing, we should want to have it, that also, that we might love him the better for a failing, a passing unlikeness to

himself, that was itself a touch of misfortune and due to an exhaustion of the atmosphere of his life, an ebb of renovating joy, only too likely, alas! to have befallen him. Finally, he will now see, this perspicuous Reader of mine, what must be one's last word, closing this long retrospect of the slow historic process of Collecting and Editing Lamb's Writings: namely, that the work will doubtless be done in course of time, but we must be in no hurry to exclaim that it is finished; and must not make ourselves look foolish in the eyes of the angels (Charles Lamb doubtless standing among them, with that wonderful smile of his, quite unchanged from what it was on earth) by describing as "the final edition," or "the ideal edition," one in which (1) Virtually nothing has been added to what was gathered in by preceding Editors. (2) Much that is important and interesting is deliberately excluded in deference to Editorial taste. (3) What is given, is given in an Order or Arrangement which vexes the Reader by its inconveniences, and would probably have offended Lamb by the extraneousness, the perplexing bibliographical pedantry, however well meant, of its principle.[1]

Thus far of Editions Past. Of the Edition Present I have left little room to speak here, but that defect will be plentifully made good by others, I hope, in other places: who, if they are of a happy disposition, and have the gifts of candour and discernment, will aver that this edition, albeit neither ideal nor

[1] The first of those remarks (1) does not, of course, apply to the "Letters," which are a province apart, but to Lamb's literary works proper. Canon Ainger has gathered in one or two lesser pieces of verse, I think—one cannot speak with immediate certainty, nor without some expenditure of time say where they are—but not a single prose contribution of Lamb's that I know of; with the exception of a letter to the "Spectator" entitled *Shakspere's Improvers*, which is buried in a note to one of the Essays.

final,[1] is yet very loyal to the truth of the matter as regards Lamb, and makes a push at perfection that carries it a good long leap beyond the mark that any have reached hitherto. Its great merit is that it will be found to contain more matter by Lamb (by from fifty to a hundred of these pages, as well as I can guess) than has ever been collected in one edition, including a number of things now for the first time restored to the light: and it will be arranged in a way which is at once inherently reasonable, from the point of view of the whole, and yet affording a pleasant result by the internal congruity and individuality and companionableness (or, so to say, pocketableness) of the separate volumes. And if I now explain briefly the way in which this is effected, and the grounds of good hard logic on which I have gone about to secure this happy result—the Reader will grant, I hope, that I have written enough for this one occasion, and will thereupon permit me to lay down my pen.

If we look at Lamb's works in the mass, and allow to traverse our minds a rapid, snapshot conception of their relation to his personality and their share in making his fame, one thing occurs: instantly his Essays separate themselves from all other works of his, and come into the foreground of our thought, as being the things we know him by, the things which his name stands for most immediately. In more senses than one are they the things we know him by. For he is the classic in whose case, more than any other, perhaps, the making acquaintance with the man (or the renewing it for the thousandth time) is our chief source of pleasure in reading the writer:

[1] It will be followed by others: I hear of one now in preparation, under the care of Mr E. V. Lucas. Mr Lucas's name is agreeably known in this connection already, and I have no doubt his edition will take its own way to being excellent; but as no part of it has yet appeared, I cannot speak, with any certainty, of its demerits. It is impossible that Mr Lucas can regret this more than I do.

and it was in the Essay, the short Prose-contribution, that he found the literary form in which he could be most himself, whom we never want to be anyone else. Let me now use for a moment the term Essay-Work to cover the whole body of his literary output in that kind ; from the most finished *Elia* essay, or the great dissertation on Shakespeare, to the slightest humorous paper in the *Reflector* or the *Indicator* or *Hone's Everyday-Book*, not leaving out any of those genialities which masqueraded in the form of a Letter to the Editor, nor, finally, omitting those stray paragraphs of creative Criticism, those nutritive morsels of Table-Talk, which are in reality Essays in a state of first compression or undevelopment —not so much crumbs from his banquet as pellets of the finest flour which it wanted but the action of a little yeast to swell into a hospitable loaf of bread. Our first business, then, in dealing with the works of the *Great Essayist*, must be to bring all his *Essay-Work* together : to have that body of unique literature compact and four-square : and to insist on keeping it so in spite of dates and the Devil—which are here one and the same thing, both having caused, as we know, much unnatural division and divorce.

But though there must be no such divorce—no alienations—there may be distinction *inter se* of things similar and juxtaposed. Look at the Essay-Work, and you see that it falls at once into two great divisions : *The Elia Essays*, first and second series ; and All Other Essay-Work whatsoever. Of the *Elia* Essays it is not necessary to speak :

> Others abide our question—they are free!

The *Other Essays* are a mustering of all that Essay-Work of Lamb, along the whole line of his life, that falls outside of the Elia company ; some pieces being from the early "Collected Works," but the great

majority being things written much later, and many of them never collected till now. In arranging these, I see not the slightest reason—nor can any man show that there is—why we should discriminate against a piece and brand it as slighter and inferior *because* it was not admitted into the "Works" of 1818: when we know, perhaps, that it was not written till 1825 or 1831. Pushing such trivialities from us, we must rather ask how Lamb himself would have dealt with his Complete and Fully-Collected Works at the end of a longer lifetime. We may answer at least that he would not have bothered his head about the Year of the Lord 1818; and granting that the world must have (since it craved for) everything that he had written and that his admirers had been able to unearth, he would have wished the things—good, better, and best—to be so arranged as to make of each volume a recognisable and companionable book. It has seemed to me that in dealing with what I call the *Other Essays*, this effect would be very well secured by the distinction which divides the 3rd and 4th volumes of this edition: the pervading note of the one volume being "Criticism"—of Literature, of Fine Art, of the Drama—the note of the other being what I may call "General Elianism," discoursing of things at large and especially of Elia himself and his diverse recollections and concernments. And so the first four volumes of this edition will present the whole body of Lamb's Essays, Greater and Lesser, if we must admit that distinction, but at any rate *all together*, as they should be, in one compact consecutive set: and yet wanting, in their arrangement, neither a reasonable respect for tradition, nor an obvious and inherent principle of order, nor yet an individuality of character in the different tomes.

In volume V., containing Poems and Plays, the romance of "Rosamund Gray" will be placed where

the connoisseur would naturally look for it. This strange and beautiful tale belongs to the poetical period of Lamb's life, and indeed to say "Poems and *Rosamund Gray*" is like saying "Poems, in Verse and Prose." The Poems proper will be arranged in chronological order, and the Plays will follow at the end of the book. I think Canon Ainger carried his chronologising (for which we must thank him) a step too far when he placed an entire long drama like "John Woodvil" at a certain point in a succession of little poems. It overshadows these little things: you cannot find the minnows for the leviathan in their midst.

In the next three volumes (VI.-VIII.) are co-ordinated and given in their completeness a run of Books for Children which are instinct with the innocence and gentleness and wisdom and charm which we associate with the name of Charles Lamb, the humour also not being absent, but attuned very cunningly to the pleasure and comprehension of little ears. Of those books, some are by Charles alone, some by Charles and Mary, as all the world knows. I shall follow the precedent set by even the earliest Editors and make no unkindly separation between the work of the brother and the sister. They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and this immortal part of them must not be divided. In this section of the works, also, the present edition will be more complete than any hitherto published, and will contain all the Lost Works recently recovered, with all the original illustrations carefully reproduced.

Without the "Specimens from the Dramatists" no edition of Lamb can be considered complete or in the fullest sense representative of the quality of his genius or the amount of his gift to English Literature. His mind was shown hardly less in the master-spirit of discrimination at work in choosing the examples

than in the flood of illumination which he shed fitfully upon the text; illustrating, as it were casually and unawares, not this or that passage in an old play only, but the very operations of the imagination, the secrets of the soul. Vols. IX. and X. of this edition will contain the "Specimens" (with the Garrick *Extracts*), which will be chronologically arranged, and the Text, as far as possible, corrected by collation with the best modern recensions of the dramatists.

In the preceding pages I have said almost nothing about the "Letters." They would be a long topic to talk of, as they are a difficult subject to control. It is acknowledged that in intrinsic literary importance, and in the interest they have for everybody who is interested in Charles Lamb, they are scarcely second to any body of work that has come from his pen. All that there is space to say of them here—and what thing more delightful could be said?—is that the present collection (vols. XI. and XII. of the edition) will contain a much greater number of Letters than any hitherto published; including not only all those that are copyright in the Fitzgerald Edition, but also a number of important and characteristic examples never printed till now.

Finally, these things have not been done without expense, as the Publishers might say; nor without taking trouble, as even I might say; nor without the co-operation and kindness of a multitude of friends, as it becomes us all to say. Individual acknowledgments a many will have to be made, if only one could do it with all the grace and gratitude that the occasion calls for. But each thank-you will appear, and be more in place, in the volume which carries the benefit of these kindnesses. Here it will be sufficient if I express my own thanks to the Publishers for having done all in their power to make my part in

the work as easy as the labours of Hercules ever admit of being made. And along with this must go my acknowledgments to Miss Marian Edwardes, whose help—collaboration, I ought to call it—has been of the greatest possible service at every part of the work of preparation, and will be found to have done more than the official genius of the Editor to enhance the value of some of the volumes.

W. M.

THE SOUTH-SEA HOUSE

READER, in thy passage from the Bank—where thou hast been receiving thy half-yearly dividends (supposing thou art a lean annuitant like myself)—to the Flower Pot, to secure a place for Dalston, or Shacklewell, or some other thy suburban retreat northerly,—didst thou never observe a melancholy looking, handsome, brick and stone edifice, to the left—where Threadneedle-street abuts upon Bishopsgate? I dare say thou hast often admired its magnificent portals ever gaping wide, and disclosing to view a grave court, with cloisters, and

pillars, with few or no traces of goers-in or comers-out—a desolation something like Balclutha's.[1]

This was once a house of trade,—a centre of busy interests. The throng of merchants was here—the quick pulse of gain—and here some forms of business are still kept up, though the soul be long since fled. Here are still to be seen stately porticos; imposing staircases; offices roomy as the state apartments in palaces—deserted, or thinly peopled with a few straggling clerks; the still more sacred interiors of court and committee rooms, with venerable faces of beadles, door-keepers—directors seated in form on solemn days (to proclaim a dead dividend,) at long worm-eaten tables, that have been mahogany, with tarnished gilt-leather coverings, supporting massy silver inkstands long since dry;—the oaken wainscots hung with pictures of deceased governors and sub-governors, of Queen Anne, and the two first monarchs of the Brunswick dynasty;—huge charts, which subsequent discoveries have antiquated;—dusty maps of Mexico, dim as dreams,—and soundings of the Bay of Panama!—The long passages hung with buckets, appended, in idle row, to walls, whose substance might defy any, short of the last, conflagration:—with vast ranges of cellarage under all, where dollars and pieces of eight once lay, an "unsunned heap," for Mammon to have solaced his solitary heart withal,—long since dissipated, or scattered into air at the blast of the breaking of that famous Bubble.——

Such is the South-Sea House. At least, such it was forty years ago, when I knew it,—a magnificent relic! What alterations may have been made in it since, I have had no opportunities of verifying. Time, I take for granted, has not freshened it. No

[1] I passed by the walls of Balclutha, and they were desolate. —Ossian.

wind has resuscitated the face of the sleeping waters. A thicker crust by this time stagnates upon it. The moths, that were then battening upon its obsolete ledgers and day-books, have rested from their depredations, but other light generations have succeeded, making fine fret-work among their single and double entries. Layers of dust have accumulated (a superfœtation of dirt!) upon the old layers, that seldom used to be disturbed, save by some curious finger, now and then, inquisitive to explore the mode of book-keeping in Queen Anne's reign; or, with less hallowed curiosity, seeking to unveil some of the mysteries of that tremendous HOAX, whose extent the petty peculators of our day look back upon with the same expression of incredulous admiration, and hopeless ambition of rivalry, as would become the puny face of modern conspiracy contemplating the Titan size of Vaux's superhuman plot.

Peace to the manes of the BUBBLE! Silence and destitution are upon thy walls, proud house, for a memorial!

Situated as thou art, in the very heart of stirring and living commerce,—amid the fret and fever of speculation—with the Bank, and the 'Change, and the India-house about thee, in the hey-day of present prosperity, with their important faces, as it were, insulting thee, their *poor neighbour out of business*—to the idle and merely contemplative,—to such as me, old house! there is a charm in thy quiet:—a cessation—a coolness from business—an indolence almost cloistral—which is delightful! With what reverence have I paced thy great bare rooms and courts at eventide! They spoke of the past:—the shade of some dead accountant, with visionary pen in ear, would flit by me, stiff as in life. Living accounts and accountants puzzle me. I have no skill in figuring. But thy great dead tomes, which scarce

three degenerate clerks of the present day could lift from their enshrining shelves—with their old fantastic flourishes, and decorative rubric interlacings—their sums in triple columniations, set down with formal superfluity of cyphers—with pious sentences at the beginning, without which our religious ancestors never ventured to open a book of business, or bill of lading—the costly vellum covers of some of them almost persuading us that we are got into some *better library*,—are very agreeable and edifying spectacles. I can look upon these defunct dragons with complacency. Thy heavy, odd-shaped ivory-handled pen-knives (our ancestors had every thing on a larger scale than we have hearts for) are as good as any thing from Herculaneum. The pounce-boxes of our days have gone retrograde.

The very clerks which I remember in the South-Sea House—I speak of forty years back—had an air very different from those in the public offices that I have had to do with since. They partook of the genius of the place!

They were mostly (for the establishment did not admit of superfluous salaries) bachelors. Generally (for they had not much to do) persons of a curious and speculative turn of mind. Old-fashioned, for a reason mentioned before. Humourists, for they were of all descriptions; and, not having been brought together in early life (which has a tendency to assimilate the members of corporate bodies to each other), but, for the most part, placed in this house in ripe or middle age, they necessarily carried into it their separate habits and oddities, unqualified, if I may so speak, as into a common stock. Hence they formed a sort of Noah's ark. Odd fishes. A lay-monastery. Domestic retainers in a great house, kept more for show than use. Yet pleasant fellows, full of chat—and not a few among them had

arrived at considerable proficiency on the German flute.

The cashier at that time was one Evans, a Cambro-Briton. He had something of the choleric complexion of his countrymen stamped on his visage, but was a worthy sensible man at bottom. He wore his hair, to the last, powdered and frizzed out, in the fashion which I remember to have seen in caricatures of what were termed, in my young days, *Maccaronies*. He was the last of that race of beaux. Melancholy as a gib-cat over his counter all the forenoon, I think I see him, making up his cash (as they call it) with tremulous fingers, as if he feared every one about him was a defaulter; in his hypochondry ready to imagine himself one; haunted, at least, with the idea of the possibility of his becoming one: his tristful visage clearing up a little over his roast neck of veal at Anderton's at two (where his picture still hangs, taken a little before his death by desire of the master of the coffee-house, which he had frequented for the last five-and-twenty years), but not attaining the meridian of its animation till evening brought on the hour of tea and visiting. The simultaneous sound of his well-known rap at the door with the stroke of the clock announcing six, was a topic of never-failing mirth in the families which this dear old bachelor gladdened with his presence. Then was his *forte*, his glorified hour! How would he chirp, and expand, over a muffin! How would he dilate into secret history! His countryman, Pennant himself, in particular, could not be more eloquent than he in relation to old and new London—the site of old theatres, churches, streets gone to decay—where Rosamond's pond stood —the Mulberry-gardens—and the Conduit in Cheap —with many a pleasant anecdote, derived from paternal tradition, of those grotesque figures which

"How would he chirp and expand over a muffin."

Hogarth has immortalized in his picture of *Noon*,—the worthy descendants of those heroic confessors, who, flying to this country, from the wrath of Louis the Fourteenth and his dragoons, kept alive the flame of pure religion in the sheltering obscurities of Hog-lane, and the vicinity of the Seven Dials!

Deputy, under Evans, was Thomas Tame. He had the air and stoop of a nobleman. You would have taken him for one, had you met him in one of the passages leading to Westminster-hall. By

stoop, I mean that gentle bending of the body forwards, which, in great men, must be supposed to be the effect of an habitual condescending attention to the applications of their inferiors. While he held you in converse, you felt strained to the height in the colloquy. The conference over, you were at leisure to smile at the comparative insignificance of the pretensions which had just awed you. His intellect was of the shallowest order. It did not reach to a saw or a proverb. His mind was in its original state of white paper. A sucking babe might have posed him. What was it then? Was he rich! Alas, no! Thomas Tame was very poor. Both he and his wife looked outwardly gentlefolks, when I fear all was not well at all times within. She had a neat meagre person, which it was evident she had not sinned in over-pampering; but in its veins was noble blood. She traced her descent, by some labyrinth of relationship, which I never thoroughly understood,—much less can explain with any heraldic certainty at this time of day,—to the illustrious, but unfortunate house of Derwentwater. This was the secret of Thomas's stoop. This was the thought—the sentiment—the bright solitary star of your lives,—ye mild and happy pair,—which cheered you in the night of intellect, and in the obscurity of your station! This was to you instead of riches, instead of rank, instead of glittering attainments: and it was worth them all together. You insulted none with it; but, while you wore it as a piece of defensive armour only, no insult likewise could reach you through it. *Decus et solamen.*

Of quite another stamp was the then accountant, John Tipp. He neither pretended to high blood, nor in good truth cared one fig about the matter. He "thought an accountant the greatest character in the world, and himself the greatest accountant

"John was not without his hobby."

in it." Yet John was not without his hobby. The fiddle relieved his vacant hours. He sang, certainly, with other notes than to the Orphean lyre. He did, indeed, scream and scrape most abominably. His fine suite of official rooms in Threadneedle-street, which, without anything very substantial appended to them, were enough to enlarge a man's notions of himself that lived in them (I know not who is the occupier of them now), resounded fortnightly to the notes of a concert of "sweet breasts," as our

ancestors would have called them, culled from club-rooms and orchestras—chorus singers—first and second violoncellos—double basses—and clarionets—who ate his cold mutton, and drank his punch, and praised his ear. He sate like Lord Midas among them. But at the desk Tipp was quite another sort of creature. Thence all ideas, that were purely ornamental, were banished. You could not speak of any thing romantic without rebuke. Politics were excluded. A newspaper was thought too refined and abstracted. The whole duty of man consisted in writing off dividend warrants. The striking of the annual balance in the company's books (which, perhaps, differed from the balance of last year in the sum of 25*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.*) occupied his days and nights for a month previous. Not that Tipp was blind to the deadness of *things* (as they call them in the city) in his beloved house, or did not sigh for a return of the old stirring days when South Sea hopes were young—(he was indeed equal to the wielding of any the most intricate accounts of the most flourishing company in these or those days):—but to a genuine accountant the difference of proceeds is as nothing. The fractional farthing is as dear to his heart as the thousands which stand before it. He is the true actor, who, whether his part be a prince or a peasant, must act it with like intensity. With Tipp form was everything. His life was formal. His actions seemed ruled with a ruler. His pen was not less erring than his heart. He made the best executor in the world: he was plagued with incessant executorships accordingly, which excited his spleen and soothed his vanity in equal ratios. He would swear (for Tipp swore) at the little orphans, whose rights he would guard with a tenacity like the grasp of the dying hand, that commended their interests to his protection. With

all this there was about him a sort of timidity—(his few enemies used to give it a worse name)—a something which, in reverence to the dead, we will place, if you please, a little on this side of the heroic. Nature certainly had been pleased to endow John Tipp with a sufficient measure of the principle of self-preservation. There is a cowardice which we do not despise, because it has nothing base or treacherous in its elements; it betrays itself, not you: it is mere temperament; the absence of the romantic and the enterprising; it sees a lion in the way, and will not, with Fortinbras, "greatly find quarrel in a straw," when some supposed honour is at stake. Tipp never mounted the box of a stage-coach in his life; or leaned against the rails of a balcony; or walked upon the ridge of a parapet; or looked down a precipice; or let off a gun; or went upon a water-party; or would willingly let you go if he could have helped it: neither was it recorded of him, that for lucre, or for intimidation, he ever forsook friend or principle.

Whom next shall we summon from the dusty dead, in whom common qualities become uncommon? Can I forget thee, Henry Man, the wit, the polished man of letters, the *author*, of the South-Sea House? who never enteredst thy office in a morning or quittedst it in mid-day (what didst *thou* in an office?) without some quirk that left a sting! Thy gibes and thy jokes are now extinct, or survive but in two forgotten volumes, which I had the good fortune to rescue from a stall in Barbican, not three days ago, and found thee terse, fresh, epigrammatic, as alive. Thy wit is a little gone by in these fastidious days—thy topics are staled by the "new-born gauds" of the time:—but great thou used to be in Public Ledgers, and in Chronicles, upon Chatham, and Shelburne, and Rockingham, and Howe, and Bur-

goyne, and Clinton, and the war which ended in the tearing from Great Britain her rebellious colonies, —and Keppel, and Wilkes, and Sawbridge, and Bull, and Dunning, and Pratt, and Richmond—and such small politics.——

A little less facetious, and a great deal more obstreperous, was fine rattling, rattleheaded Plumer. He was descended,—not in a right line, reader (for his lineal pretensions, like his personal, favoured a little of the sinister bend)—from the Plumers of Hertfordshire. So tradition gave him out; and certain family features not a little sanctioned the opinion. Certainly old Walter Plumer (his reputed author) had been a rake in his days, and visited much in Italy, and had seen the world. He was uncle, bachelor-uncle, to the fine old whig still living, who has represented the county in so many successive parliaments, and has a fine old mansion near Ware. Walter flourished in George the Second's days, and was the same who was summoned before the House of Commons about a business of franks, with the old Duchess of Marlborough. You may read of it in Johnson's "Life of Cave." Cave came off cleverly in that business. It is certain our Plumer did nothing to discountenance the rumour. He rather seemed pleased whenever it was, with all gentleness, insinuated. But, besides his family pretensions, Plumer was an engaging fellow, and sang gloriously.——

Not so sweetly sang Plumer as thou sangest, mild, child-like, pastoral M——; a flute's breathing less divinely whispering than thy Arcadian melodies, when, in tones worthy of Arden, thou didst chant that song sung by Amiens to the banished Duke, which proclaims the winter wind more lenient than for a man to be ungrateful. Thy sire was old surly M——, the unapproachable churchwarden of Bishopsgate. He knew not what he did, when he begat

thee, like spring, gentle offspring of blustering winter :—only fortunate in thy ending, which should have been mild, conciliatory, swan-like.——

Much remains to sing. Many fantastic shapes rise up, but they must be mine in private :—already I have fooled the reader to the top of his bent ;—else could I omit that strange creature Woollett, who existed in trying the question, and *bought litigations?* —and still stranger, inimitable, solemn Hepworth, from whose gravity Newton might have deduced the law of gravitation. How profoundly would he nib a pen—with what deliberation would he wet a wafer !——

But it is time to close—night's wheels are rattling fast over me—it is proper to have done with this solemn mockery.

Reader, what if I have been playing with thee all this while—peradventure the very *names*, which I have summoned up before thee, are fantastic—insubstantial—like Henry Pimpernel, and old John Naps of Greece :——

Be satisfied that something answering to them has had a being. Their importance is from the past.

OXFORD IN THE VACATION

CASTING a preparatory glance at the bottom of this article—as the wary connoisseur in prints, with cursory eye (which, while it reads, seems as though it read not,) never fails to consult the *quis sculpsit* in the corner, before he pronounces some rare piece to be a Vivares, or a Woollet—methinks I hear you exclaim, Reader, *Who is Elia?*

Because in my last I tried to divert thee with some half-forgotten humours of some old clerks defunct, in an old house of businesss, long since gone to decay, doubtless you have already set me down in your mind as one of the self-same college——a votary of the desk—a notched and cropt scrivener—one that sucks his sustenance, as certain sick people are said to do, through a quill.

Well, I do agnize something of the sort. I confess that it is my humour, my fancy—in the forepart of the day, when the mind of your man of letters requires some relaxation—(and none better than such as at first sight seems most abhorrent from his beloved studies)—to while away some good hours of my time in the contemplation of indigos, cottons, raw silks, piece-goods, flowered or otherwise. In the first place * * * and then it sends you home with

such increased appetite to your books * * * * * not to say, that your outside sheets, and waste wrappers of foolscap, do receive into them, most kindly and naturally, the impression of sonnets, epigrams, *essays*—so that the very parings of a counting-house are, in some sort, the settings up of an author. The enfranchised quill, that has plodded all the morning among the cart-rucks of figures and cyphers, frisks and curvets so at its ease over the flowery carpet-ground of a midnight dissertation.—It feels its promotion. * * * * * So that you see, upon the whole, the literary dignity of *Elia* is very little, if at all, compromised in the condescension.

Not that, in my anxious detail of the many commodities incidental to the life of a public office, I would be thought blind to certain flaws, which a cunning carper might be able to pick in this Joseph's vest. And here I must have leave, in the fulness of my soul, to regret the abolition, and doing-away-with altogether, of those consolatory interstices, and sprinklings of freedom, through the four seasons,—the *red-letter days*, now become, to all intents and purposes, *dead-letter days*. There was Paul, and Stephen, and Barnabas—

Andrew and John, men famous in old times

—we were used to keep all their days holy, as long back as I was at school at Christ's. I remember their effigies, by the same token, in the old *Basket* Prayer Book. There hung Peter in his uneasy posture——holy Bartlemy in the troublesome act of flaying, after the famous Marsyas by Spagnoletti.—— I honoured them all, and could almost have wept the defalcation of Iscariot—so much did we love to keep holy memories sacred :—only methought I a little grudged at the coalition of the *better Jude* with Simon—clubbing (as it were) their sanctities together,

to make up one poor gaudy-day between them—as an economy unworthy of the dispensation.

These were bright visitations in a scholar's and a clerk's life—"far off their coming shone."—I was as good as an almanac in those days. I could have told you such a saint's-day falls out next week, or the week after. Peradventure the Epiphany, by some periodical infelicity, would, once in six years, merge in a Sabbath. Now am I little better than one of the profane. Let me not be thought to arraign the wisdom of my civil superiors, who have judged the further observation of these holy tides to be papistical, superstitious. Only in a custom of such long standing, methinks, if their Holinesses the Bishops had, in decency, been first sounded——but I am wading out of my depths. I am not the man to decide the limits of civil and ecclesiastical authority——I am plain Elia—no Selden, nor Archbishop Usher—though at present in the thick of their books, here in the heart of learning, under the shadow of the mighty Bodley.

I can here play the gentleman, enact the student. To such a one as myself, who has been defrauded in his young years of the sweet food of academic institution, nowhere is so pleasant, to while away a few idle weeks at, as one or other of the Universities. Their vacation, too, at this time of the year, falls in so pat with *ours*. Here I can take my walks unmolested, and fancy myself of what degreee or standing I please. I seem admitted *ad eundem*. I fetch up past opportunities. I can rise at the chapel-bell, and dream that it rings for *me*. In moods of humility I can be a Sizar, or a Servitor. When the peacock vein rises, I strut a Gentleman Commoner. In graver moments, I proceed Master of Arts. Indeed I do not think I am much unlike that respectable character. I have seen your dim-eyed vergers, and bed-makers

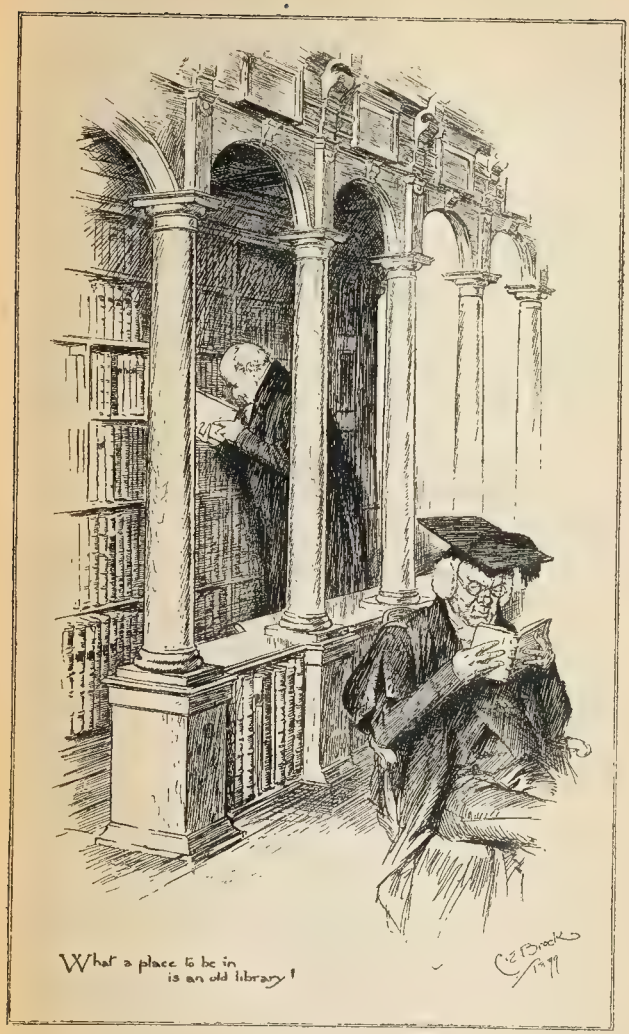
in spectacles, drop a bow or curtsy, as I pass, wisely mistaking me for something of the sort. I go about in black, which favours the notion. Only in Christ Church reverend quadrangle, I can be content to pass for nothing short of a Seraphic Doctor.

The walks at these times are so much one's own, —the tall trees of Christ's, the groves of Magdalen! The halls deserted, and with open doors, inviting one to slip in unperceived, and pay a devoir to some Founder, or noble or royal Benefactress (that should have been ours) whose portrait seems to smile upon their over-looked beadsman, and to adopt me for their own. Then, to take a peep in by the way at the butteries, and sculleries, redolent of antique hospitality: the immense caves of kitchens, kitchen fire-places, cordial recesses; ovens whose first pies were baked four centuries ago; and spits which have cooked for Chaucer! Not the meanest minister among the dishes but is hallowed to me through his imagination, and the Cook goes forth a Manciple.

Antiquity! thou wondrous charm, what art thou? that, being nothing, art every thing! When thou *wert*, thou wert not antiquity—then thou wert nothing, but hadst a remoter *antiquity*, as thou called'st it, to look back to with blind veneration; thou thyself being to thyself flat, jejune, *modern!* What mystery lurks in this retroversion? or what half Januses[1] are we, that cannot look forward with the same idolatry with which we for ever revert! The mighty future is as nothing, being every thing! the past is every thing, being nothing!

What were thy *dark ages?* Surely the sun rose as brightly then as now, and man got him to his work in the morning. Why is it that we can never hear mention of them without an accompanying feeling, as though a palpable obscure had dimmed the face of

[1] Januses of one face.—Sir Thomas Browne.


What a place to be in
is an old library!

things, and that our ancestors wandered to and fro groping!

Above all thy rarities, old Oxenford, what do most arride and solace me, are thy repositories of mouldering learning, thy shelves——

What a place to be in is an old library! It seems as though all the souls of all the writers that have bequeathed their labours to these Bodleians, were reposing here, as in some dormitory, or middle state. I do not want to handle, to profane the leaves, their winding-sheets. I could as soon dislodge a shade. I seem to inhale learning, walking amid their foliage; and the odour of their old moth-scented coverings is fragrant as the first bloom of those sciential apples which grew amid the happy orchard.

Still less have I curiosity to disturb the elder repose of MSS. Those *variæ lectiones*, so tempting to the more erudite palates, do but disturb and unsettle my faith. I am no Herculanean raker. The credit of the three witnesses might have slept unimpeached for me. I leave these curiosities to Porson, and to G. D.—whom, by the way, I found busy as a moth over some rotten archive, rummaged out of some seldom-explored press, in a nook at Oriel. With long poring, he is grown almost into a book. He stood as passive as one by the side of the old shelves. I longed to new-coat him in Russia, and assign him his place. He might have mustered for a tall Scapula.

D. is assiduous in his visits to these seats of learning. No inconsiderable portion of his moderate fortune, I apprehend, is consumed in journeys between them and Clifford's Inn—where, like a dove on the asp's nest, he has long taken up his unconscious abode, amid an incongruous assembly of attorneys, attorney's clerks, apparitors, promoters, vermin of the law, among whom he sits, "in calm and sinless peace." The fangs of the law pierce him not—the winds of

litigation blow over his humble chambers—the hard sheriff's officer moves his hat as he passes—legal nor illegal discourtesy touches him—none thinks of offering violence or injustice to him—you would as soon "strike an abstract idea."

D. has been engaged, he tells me, through a course of laborious years, in an investigation into all curious matter connected with the two Universities; and has lately lit upon a MS. collection of charters, relative to C——, by which he hopes to settle some disputed points—particularly that long controversy between them as to priority of foundation. The ardour with which he engages in these liberal pursuits, I am afraid, has not met with all the encouragement it deserved, either here, or at C——. Your caputs, and heads of colleges, care less than any body else about these questions.—Contented to suck the milky fountains of their Alma Maters, without inquiring into the venerable gentlewomen's years, they rather hold such curiosities to be impertinent—unreverend. They have their good glebe lands *in manu*, and care not much to rake into the title-deeds. I gather at least so much from other sources, for D. is not a man to complain.

D. started like an unbroke heifer, when I interrupted him. *A priori* it was not very probable that we should have met in Oriel. But D. would have done the same, had I accosted him on the sudden in his own walks in Clifford's-inn, or in the Temple. In addition to a provoking shortsightedness (the effect of late studies and watchings at the midnight oil) D. is the most absent of men. He made a call the other morning at our friend *M.*'s in Bedford-square; and, finding nobody at home, was ushered into the hall, where, asking for pen and ink, with great exactitude of purpose he enters me his name in the book—which ordinarily lies about in such places,

to record the failures of the untimely or unfortunate visitor—and takes his leave with many ceremonies, and professions of regret. Some two or three hours after, his walking destinies returned him into the same neighbourhood again, and again the quiet image of the fire-side circle at *M.*'s——Mrs *M.* presiding at it like a Queen Lar, with pretty *A. S.* at her side——striking irresistibly on his fancy, he makes another call (forgetting that they were "certainly not to return from the country before that day week") and disappointed a second time, inquires for pen and paper as before: again the book is brought, and in the line just above that in which he is about to print his second name (his re-script)—his first name (scarce dry) looks out upon him like another Sosia, or as if a man should suddenly encounter his own duplicate!—The effect may be conceived. D. made many a good resolution against any such lapses in future. I hope he will not keep them too rigorously.

For with G. D.—to be absent from the body, is sometimes (not to speak it profanely) to be present with the Lord. At the very time when, personally encountering thee, he passes on with no recognition ——or, being stopped, starts like a thing surprised—at that moment, reader, he is on Mount Tabor—or Parnassus — or co-sphered with Plato — or, with Harrington, framing "immortal commonwealths"—devising some plan of amelioration to thy country, or thy species——peradventure meditating some individual kindness or courtesy, to be done to *thee thyself*, the returning consciousness of which made him to start so guiltily at thy obtruded personal presence.

D. is delightful any where, but he is at the best in such places as these. He cares not much for Bath. He is out of his element at Buxton, at Scarborough, or Harrowgate. The Cam and the

Isis are to him "better than all the waters of Damascus." On the Muses' hill he is happy, and good, as one of the Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains; and when he goes about with you to show you the halls and colleges, you think you have with you the Interpreter at the House Beautiful.

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL FIVE AND THIRTY YEARS AGO

IN Mr Lamb's "Works," published a year or two since, I find a magnificent eulogy on my old school,[1] such as it was, or now appears to him to have been, between the years 1782 and 1789. It happens, very oddly, that my own standing at Christ's was nearly corresponding with his; and, with all gratitude to him for his enthusiasm for the cloisters, I think he has contrived to bring together whatever can be said in praise of them, dropping all the other side of the argument most ingeniously.

I remember L. at school; and can well recollect that he had some peculiar advantages, which I and others of his schoolfellows had not. His friends lived in town, and were near at hand; and he had the privilege of going to see them, almost as often as he wished, through some invidious distinction, which was denied to us. The present worthy sub-treasurer to the Inner Temple can explain how that happened. He had his tea and hot rolls in a morning,

[1] Recollections of Christ's Hospital.

while we were battening upon our quarter of a penny loaf—our *crug*—moistened with attenuated small beer, in wooden piggins, smacking of the pitched leathern jack it was poured from. Our Monday's milk porritch, blue and tasteless, and the pease soup of Saturday, coarse and choking, were enriched for him with a slice of "extraordinary bread and butter," from the hot-loaf of the Temple. The Wednesday's mess of millet, somewhat less repugnant—(we had three banyan to four meat days in the week)—was endeared to his palate with a lump of double-refined, and a smack of ginger (to make it go down the more glibly) or the fragrant cinnamon. In lieu of our *half-pickled* Sunday's, or *quite fresh* boiled beef on Thursdays (strong as *caro equina*), with detestable marigolds floating in the pail to poison the broth—our scanty mutton crags on Fridays—and rather more savoury, but grudging, portions of the same flesh, rotten-roasted or rare, on the Tuesdays (the only dish which excited our appetites, and disappointed our stomachs, in almost equal proportion)—he had his hot plate of roast veal, or the more tempting griskin (exotics unknown to our palates), cooked in the paternal kitchen (a great thing), and brought him daily by his maid or aunt! I remember the good old relative (in whom love forbade pride) squatting down upon some odd stone in a by-nook of the cloisters, disclosing the viands (of higher regale than those cates which the ravens ministered to the Tishbite); and the contending passions of L. at the unfolding. There was love for the bringer; shame for the thing brought, and the manner of its bringing; sympathy for those who were too many to share in it; and, at top of all, hunger (eldest, strongest of the passions!) predominant, breaking down the stony fences of shame, and awkwardness, and a troubling over-consciousness.

'In a by-nook of the cloisters'

I was a poor friendless boy. My parents, and those who should care for me, were far away. Those few acquaintances of theirs, which they could reckon upon being kind to me in the great city, after a little forced notice, which they had the grace to take of me on my first arrival in town, soon grew tired of my holiday visits. They seemed to them to recur too often, though I thought them few enough; and, one after another, they all failed me, and I felt myself alone among six hundred playmates.

O the cruelty of separating a poor lad from his early homestead! The yearnings which I used to have towards it in those unfledged years! How, in my dreams, would my native town (far in the west) come back, with its church, and trees, and faces! How I would wake weeping, and in the anguish of my heart exclaim upon sweet Calne in Wiltshire!

To this late hour of my life, I trace impressions left by the recollection of those friendless holidays. The long warm days of summer never return but they bring with them a gloom from the haunting memory of those *whole-day-leaves*, when, by some strange arrangement, we were turned out, for the live-long day, upon our own hands, whether we had friends to go to, or none. I remember those bathing-excursions to the New-River, which L. recalls with such relish, better, I think, than he can—for he was a home-seeking lad, and did not much care for such water-pastimes:—How merrily we would sally forth into the fields; and strip under the first warmth of the sun; and wanton like young dace in the streams; getting us appetites for noon, which those of us that were pennyless (our scanty morning crust long since exhausted) had not the means of allaying—while the cattle, and the birds, and the fishes, were at feed about us, and we had nothing to satisfy our cravings—the very beauty of the day, and the exercise of the

"Wanton like young dace in the stream."

pastime, and the sense of liberty, setting a keener edge upon them!—How faint and languid, finally, we would return, towards nightfall, to our desired morsel, half-rejoicing, half-reluctant, that the hours of our uneasy liberty had expired!

It was worse in the days of winter, to go prowling about the streets objectless—shivering at cold windows of print-shops, to extract a little amusement; or haply, as a last resort, in the hope of a little novelty, to pay a fifty-times repeated visit (where our individual faces should be as well known to the warden as those of his own charges) to the Lions in the Tower—to whose levée, by courtesy immemorial, we had a prescriptive title to admission.

L.'s governor (so we called the patron who presented us to the foundation) lived in a manner under his paternal roof. Any complaint which he had to make was sure of being attended to. This was

understood at Christ's, and was an effectual screen to him against the severity of masters, or worse tyranny of the monitors. The oppressions of these young brutes are heart-sickening to call to recollection. I have been called out of my bed, and *waked for the purpose*, in the coldest winter nights—and this not once, but night after night—in my shirt, to receive the discipline of a leathern thong, with eleven other sufferers, because it pleased my callow overseer, when there has been any talking heard after we were gone to bed, to make the six last beds in the dormitory, where the youngest children of us slept, answerable for an offence they neither dared to commit, nor had the power to hinder.—The same execrable tyranny drove the younger part of us from the fires, when our feet were perishing with snow; and under the cruelest penalties, forbade the indulgence of a drink of water, when we lay in sleepless summer nights, fevered with the season, and the day's sports.

There was one H——, who, I learned, in after days, was seen expiating some maturer offence in the hulks. (Do I flatter myself in fancying that this might be the planter of that name, who suffered ——at Nevis, I think, or St Kitts,——some few years since? My friend Tobin was the benevolent instrument of bringing him to the gallows.) This petty Nero actually branded a boy, who had offended him, with a red hot iron; and nearly starved forty of us, with exacting contributions, to the one half of our bread, to pamper a young ass, which, incredible as it may seem, with the connivance of the nurse's daughter (a young flame of his) he had contrived to smuggle in, and keep upon the leads of the *ward*, as they called our dormitories. This game went on for better than a week, till the foolish beast, not able to fare well but he must cry roast meat—happier than Caligula's minion, could he have kept his own counsel

—but foolisher, alas! than any of his species in the fables—waxing fat, and kicking, in the fulness of bread, one unlucky minute would needs proclaim his good fortune to the world below; and, laying out his simple throat, blew such a ram's horn blast, as (toppling down the walls of his own Jericho) set concealment any longer at defiance. The client was dismissed, with certain attentions, to Smithfield; but I never understood that the patron underwent any censure on the occasion. This was in the stewardship of L.'s admired Perry.

Under the same *facile* administration, can L. have forgotten the cool impunity with which the nurses used to carry away openly, in open platters, for their own tables, one out of two of every hot joint, which the careful matron had been seeing scrupulously weighed out for our dinners? These things were daily practised in that magnificent apartment, which L. (grown connoisseur since, we presume) praises so highly for the grand paintings "by Verrio, and others," with which it is "hung round and adorned." But the sight of sleek well-fed blue-coat boys in pictures was, at that time, I believe, little consolatory to him, or us, the living ones, who saw the better part of our provisions carried away before our faces by harpies; and ourselves reduced (with the Trojan in the hall of Dido)

To feed our minds with idle portraiture.

L. has recorded the repugnance of the school to *gags*, or the fat of fresh beef boiled; and sets it down to some superstition. But these unctuous morsels are never grateful to young palates (children are universally fat-haters) and in strong coarse, boiled meats, *unsalted*, are detestable. A *gag-eater* in our time was equivalent to a *goul*, and held in equal detestation. —— suffered under the imputation.

"Used to carry away openly."

——'Twas said,
He ate strange flesh.

He was observed, after dinner, carefully to gather up the remnants left at his table (not many, nor very choice fragments, you may credit me)—and, in an especial manner, these disreputable morsels, which he would convey away, and secretly stow in the settle that stood at his bed-side. None saw when he ate them. It was rumoured that he privately devoured them in the night. He was watched, but no traces of such midnight practices were discoverable. Some reported, that, on leave-days, he had been seen to carry out of the bounds a large blue check handkerchief, full of something. This then must be the accursed thing. Conjecture next was at work to

imagine how he could dispose of it. Some said he sold it to the beggars. This belief generally prevailed. He went about moping. None spake to him. No one would play with him. He was excommunicated; put out of the pale of the school. He was too powerful a boy to be beaten, but he underwent every mode of that negative punishment, which is more grievous than many stripes. Still he persevered. At length he was observed by two of his school-fellows, who were determined to get at the secret, and had traced him one leave-day for that purpose, to enter a large worn-out building, such as there exist specimens of in Chancery-lane, which are let out to various scales of pauperism with open door, and a common staircase. After him they silently slunk in, and followed by stealth up four flights, and saw him tap at a poor wicket, which was opened by an aged woman, meanly clad. Suspicion was now ripened into certainty. The informers had secured their victim. They had him in their toils. Accusation was formally preferred, and retribution most signal was looked for. Mr Hathaway, the then steward (for this happened a little after my time), with that patient sagacity which tempered all his conduct, determined to investigate the matter, before he proceeded to sentence. The result was, that the supposed mendicants, the receivers or purchasers of the mysterious scraps, turned out to be the parents of ——, an honest couple come to decay,—whom this seasonable supply had, in all probability, saved from mendicancy; and that this young stork, at the expense of his own good name, had all this while been only feeding the old birds!— The governors on this occasion, much to their honour, voted a present relief to the family of ——, and presented him with a silver medal. The lesson which the steward read upon RASH JUDGMENT, on the occasion of publicly delivering the medal to ——,

I believe, would not be lost upon his auditory.—I had left school then, but I well remember ——. He was a tall, shambling youth, with a cast in his eye, not at all calculated to conciliate hostile prejudices. I have since seen him carrying a baker's basket. I think I heard he did not do quite so well by himself, as he had done by the old folks.

I was a hypochondriac lad; and the sight of a boy in fetters, upon the day of my first putting on the blue clothes, was not exactly fitted to assuage the natural terrors of initiation. I was of tender years, barely turned of seven; and had only read of such things in books, or seen them but in dreams. I was told he had *run away*. This was the punishment for the first offence.—As a novice I was soon after taken to see the dungeons. These were little, square, Bedlam cells, where a boy could just lie at his length upon straw and a blanket—a mattress, I think, was afterwards substituted—with a peep of light, let in askance, from a prison-orifice at top, barely enough to read by. Here the poor boy was locked in by himself all day, without sight of any but the porter who brought him his bread and water—who *might not speak to him*;—or of the beadle, who came twice a week to call him out to receive his periodical chastisement, which was almost welcome, because it separated him for a brief interval from solitude:—and here he was shut up by himself *of nights*, out of the reach of any sound, to suffer whatever horrors the weak nerves, and superstition incident to his time of life, might subject him to.[1] This was the penalty for the second

[1] One or two instances of lunacy, or attempted suicide, accordingly, at length convinced the governors of the impolicy of this part of the sentence, and the midnight torture to the spirits was dispensed with.—This fancy of dungeons for children was a sprout of Howard's brain; for which (saving the reverence due to Holy Paul) methinks, I could willingly spit upon his statue.

offence.—Wouldst thou like, reader, to see what became of him in the next degree?

The culprit, who had been a third time an offender, and whose expulsion was at this time deemed irreversible, was brought forth, as at some solemn *auto da fe*, arrayed in uncouth and most appalling attire—all trace of his late "watchet weeds" carefully effaced, he was exposed in a jacket, resembling those which London lamplighters formerly delighted in, with a cap of the same. The effect of this divestiture was such as the ingenious devisers of it could have anticipated. With his pale and frightened features, it was as if some of those disfigurements in Dante had seized upon him. In this disguisement he was brought into the hall (*L.'s favourite state-room*), where awaited him the whole number of his schoolfellows, whose joint lessons and sports he was thenceforth to share no more; the awful presence of the steward, to be seen for the last time; of the executioner beadle, clad in his state robe for the occasion; and of two faces more, of direr import, because never but in these extremities visible. These were governors; two of whom, by choice, or charter, were always accustomed to officiate at these *Ultima Supplicia;* not to mitigate (so at least we understood it), but to enforce the uttermost stripe. Old Bamber Gascoigne, and Peter Aubert, I remember, were colleagues on one occasion, when the beadle turning rather pale, a glass of brandy was ordered to prepare him for the mysteries. The scourging was, after the old Roman fashion, long and stately. The lictor accompanied the criminal quite round the hall. We were generally too faint with attending to the previous disgusting circumstances, to make accurate report with our eyes of the degree of corporal suffering inflicted. Report, of course, gave out the back knotty and livid. After scourging, he was made over, in his *San Benito*, to his friends, if he had any (but commonly

such poor runagates were friendless), or to his parish officer, who, to enhance the effect of the scene, had his station allotted to him on the outside of the hall gate.

These solemn pageantries were not played off so often as to spoil the general mirth of the community. We had plenty of exercise and recreation *after* school hours; and, for myself, I must confess, that I was never happier, than *in* them. The Upper and Lower Grammar Schools were held in the same room; and an imaginary line only divided their bounds. Their character was as different as that of the inhabitants on the two sides of the Pyrenees. The Rev. James Boyer was the Upper Master: but the Rev. Matthew Field presided over that portion of the apartment, of which I had the good fortune to be a member. We lived a life as careless as birds. We talked and did just what we pleased, and nobody molested us. We carried an accidence, or a grammar, for form; but, for any trouble it gave us, we might take two years in getting through the verbs deponent, and another two in forgetting all that we had learned about them. There was now and then the formality of saying a lesson, but if you had not learned it, a brush across the shoulders (just enough to disturb a fly) was the sole remonstrance. Field never used the rod; and in truth he wielded the cane with no great good will—holding it "like a dancer." It looked in his hands rather like an emblem than an instrument of authority; and an emblem, too, he was ashamed of. He was a good easy man, that did not care to ruffle his own peace, nor perhaps set any great consideration upon the value of juvenile time. He came among us, now and then, but often staid away whole days from us; and when he came, it made no difference to us—he had his private room to retire to, the short time he staid, to be out of the sound of our noise. Our mirth

and uproar went on. We had classics of our own, without being beholden to "insolent Greece or haughty Rome," that passed current among us—Peter Wilkins—the Adventures of the Hon. Capt. Robert Boyle—the Fortunate Blue Coat Boy—and the like. Or we cultivated a turn for mechanic or scientific operations; making little sun-dials of paper; or weaving those ingenious parentheses, called *cat-cradles;* or making dry peas to dance upon the end of a tin pipe; or studying the art military over that laudable game "French and English," and a hundred other such devices to pass away the time—mixing the useful with the agreeable—as would have made the souls of Rousseau and John Locke chuckle to have seen us.

Matthew Field belonged to that class of modest divines who affect to mix in equal proportion the *gentleman*, the *scholar*, and the *Christian;* but, I know not how, the first ingredient is generally found to be the predominating dose in the composition. He was engaged in gay parties, or with his courtly bow at some episcopal levée, when he should have been attending upon us. He had for many years the classical charge of a hundred children, during the four or five first years of their education; and his very highest form seldom proceeded further than two or three of the introductory fables of Phædrus. How things were suffered to go on thus, I cannot guess. Boyer, who was the proper person to have remedied these abuses, always affected, perhaps felt, a delicacy in interfering in a province not strictly his own. I have not been without my suspicions, that he was not altogether displeased at the contrast we presented to his end of the school. We were a sort of Helots to his young Spartans. He would sometimes, with ironic deference, send to borrow a rod of the Under Master, and then, with Sardonic grin, observe to one of his

upper boys, "how neat and fresh the twigs looked." While his pale students were battering their brains over Xenophon and Plato, with a silence as deep as that enjoined by the Samite, we were enjoying ourselves at our ease in our little Goshen. We saw a little into the secrets of his discipline, and the prospect did but the more reconcile us to our lot. His thunders rolled innocuous for us; his storms came near, but never touched us; contrary to Gideon's miracle, while all around were drenched, our fleece was dry.[1] His boys turned out the better scholars; we, I suspect, have the advantage in temper. His pupils cannot speak of him without something of terror allaying their gratitude; the remembrance of Field comes back with all the soothing images of indolence, and summer slumbers, and work like play, and innocent idleness, and Elysian exemptions, and life itself a "playing holiday."

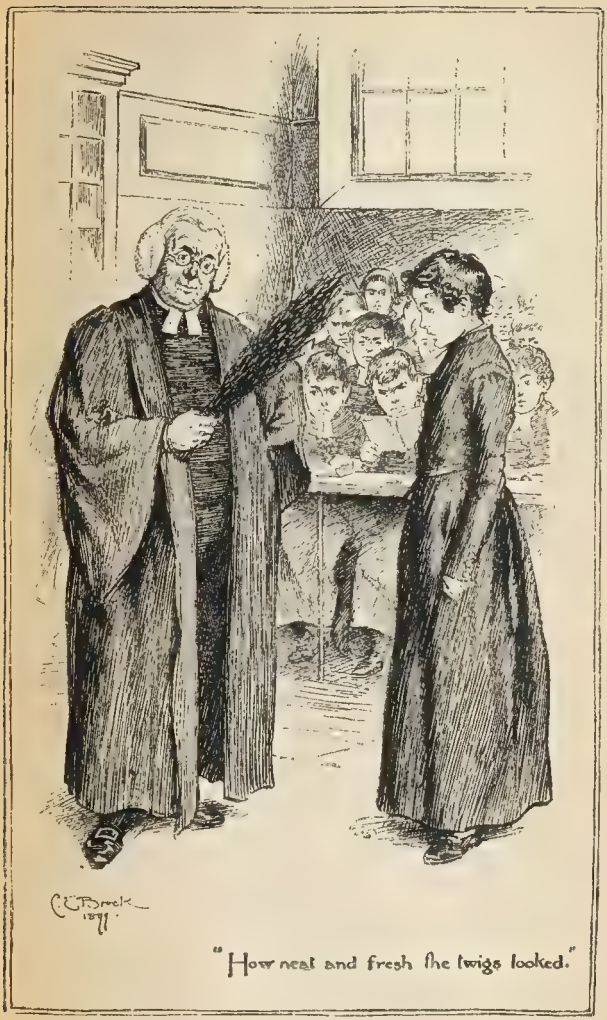
Though sufficiently removed from the jurisdiction of Boyer, we were near enough (as I have said) to understand a little of his system. We occasionally heard sounds of the *Ululantes*, and caught glances of Tartarus. B. was a rabid pedant. His English style was crampt to barbarism. His Easter anthems (for his duty obliged him to those periodical flights) were grating as scrannel pipes.[2]—He would laugh, ay, and heartily, but then it must be at Flaccus's quibble about *Rex*——or at the *tristis severitas in vultu*, or *inspicere in patinas*, of Terence—thin jests, which at

[1] Cowley.

[2] In this and every thing B. was the antipodes of his coadjutor. While the former was digging his brains for crude anthems, worth a pig-nut, F. would be recreating his gentlemanly fancy in the more flowery walks of the Muses. A little dramatic effusion of his, under the name of Vertumnus and Pomona, is not yet forgotten by the chroniclers of that sort of literature. It was accepted by Garrick, but the town did not give it their sanction.—B. used to say of it, in a way of half-compliment, half-irony, that it was *too classical for representation.*

their first broaching could hardly have had *vis* enough to move a Roman muscle.—He had two wigs, both pedantic, but of different omen. The one serene, smiling, fresh powdered, betokening a mild day. The other, an old discoloured, unkempt, angry caxon, denoting frequent and bloody execution. Woe to the school, when he made his morning appearance in his *passy*, or *passionate wig*. No comet expounded surer.—J. B. had a heavy hand. I have known him double his knotty fist at a poor trembling child (the maternal milk hardly dry upon its lips) with a "Sirrah, do you presume to set your wits at me?"—Nothing was more common than to see him make a headlong entry into the schoolroom, from his inner recess, or library, and, with turbulent eye, singling out a lad, roar out, "Od's my life, Sirrah," (his favourite adjuration) "I have a great mind to whip you,"—then, with as sudden a retracting impulse, fling back into his lair—and, after a cooling lapse of some minutes (during which all but the culprit had totally forgotten the context) drive headlong out again, piecing out his imperfect sense, as if it had been some Devil's Litany, with the expletory yell—"*and I* WILL, *too*."—In his gentler moods, when the *rabidus furor* was assuaged, he had resort to an ingenious method, peculiar, for what I have heard, to himself, of whipping the boy, and reading the Debates, at the same time; a paragraph, and a lash between; which in those times, when parliamentary oratory was most at a height and flourishing in these realms, was not calculated to impress the patient with a veneration for the diffuser graces of rhetoric.

Once, and but once, the uplifted rod was known to fall ineffectual from his hand—when droll squinting W—— having been caught putting the inside of the master's desk to a use for which the architect had clearly not designed it, to justify himself, with great



"How neat and fresh the twigs looked."

simplicity averred, that *he did not know that the thing had been forewarned.* This exquisite irrecognition of any law antecedent to the *oral* or *declaratory*, struck so irresistibly upon the fancy of all who heard it (the pedagogue himself not excepted) that remission was unavoidable.

L. has given credit to B.'s great merits as an instructor. Coleridge, in his literary life, has pronounced a more intelligible and ample encomium on them. The author of the Country Spectator doubts not to compare him with the ablest teachers of antiquity. Perhaps we cannot dismiss him better than with the pious ejaculation of C.—when he heard that his old master was on his death-bed—"Poor J. B.!—may all his faults be forgiven; and may he be wafted to bliss by little cherub boys all head and wings, with no *bottoms* to reproach his sublunary infirmities."

Under him were many good and sound scholars bred.—First Grecian of my time was Lancelot Pepys Stevens, kindest of boys and men, since Co-grammar-master (and inseparable companion) with Dr T——e. What an edifying spectacle did this brace of friends present to those who remembered the anti-socialities of their predecessors!—You never met the one by chance in the street without a wonder, which was quickly dissipated by the almost immediate sub-appearance of the other. Generally arm in arm, these kindly coadjutors lightened for each other the toilsome duties of their profession, and when, in advanced age, one found it convenient to retire, the other was not long in discovering that it suited him to lay down the fasces also. Oh, it is pleasant, as it is rare, to find the same arm linked in yours at forty, which at thirteen helped it to turn over the *Cicero De Amicitia*, or some tale of Antique Friendship, which the young heart even then was burning to

anticipate !—Co-Grecian with S. was Th——, who has since executed with ability various diplomatic functions at the Northern courts. Th—— was a tall, dark, saturnine youth, sparing of speech, with raven locks.—Thomas Fanshaw Middleton followed him (now Bishop of Calcutta), a scholar and a gentleman in his teens. He has the reputation of an excellent critic ; and is author (besides the Country Spectator) of a Treatise on the Greek Article, against Sharpe.—M. is said to bear his mitre high in India, where the *regni novitas* (I dare say) sufficiently justifies the bearing. A humility quite as primitive as that of Jewel or Hooker might not be exactly fitted to impress the minds of those Anglo-Asiatic diocesans with a reverence for home institutions, and the church which those fathers watered. The manners of M. at school, though firm, were mild, and unassuming.—Next to M. (if not senior to him) was Richards, author of the Aboriginal Britons, the most spirited of the Oxford Prize Poems ; a pale, studious Grecian.—Then followed poor S——, ill-fated M——! of these the Muse is silent.

> Finding some of Edward's race
> Unhappy, pass their annals by.

Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee—the dark pillar not yet turned—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—Logician, Metaphysician, Bard !—How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb* of the young Mirandula), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblichus, or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar

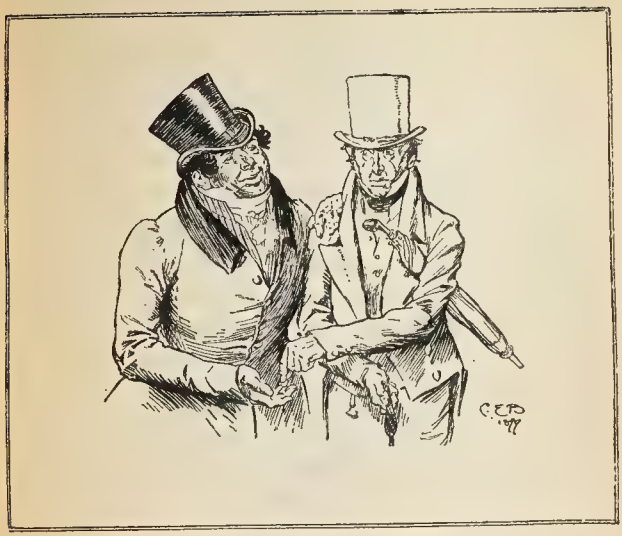
——while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the *inspired charity-boy!* Many were the "wit-combats," (to dally awhile with the words of old Fuller,) between him and C. V. Le G——, "which two I behold like a Spanish great gallion, and an English man-of-war; Master Coleridge, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid, but slow in his performances. C. V. L., with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Nor shalt thou, their compeer, be quickly forgotten, Allen, with the cordial smile, and still more cordial laugh, with which thou wert wont to make the old Cloisters shake, in thy cognition of some poignant jest of theirs; or the anticipation of some more material, and, peradventure, practical one, of thine own. Extinct are those smiles, with that beautiful countenance, with which (for thou wert the *Nireus formosus* of the school), in the days of thy maturer waggery, thou didst disarm the wrath of infuriated town-damsel, who, incensed by provoking pinch, turning tigress-like round, suddenly converted by thy angel-look, exchanged the half-formed terrible "*bl*——," for a gentler greeting—"*bless thy handsome face!*"

Next follow two, who ought to be now alive, and the friends of Elia—the junior Le G—— and F——; who impelled, the former by a roving temper, the latter by too quick a sense of neglect—ill capable of enduring the slights poor Sizars are sometimes subject to in our seats of learning—exchanged their Alma Mater for the camp; perishing, one by climate, and one on the plains of Salamanca:—Le G——, sanguine, volatile, sweet-natured: F—— dogged, faithful, anticipative of insult, warm-hearted,

with something of the old Roman height about him.

Fine, frank-hearted Fr——, the present master of Hertford, with Marmaduke T——, mildest of Missionaries—and both my good friends still—close the catalogue of Grecians in my time.



THE TWO RACES OF MEN

THE human species, according to the best theory I can form of it, is composed of two distinct races, *the men who borrow*, and *the men who lend*. To these two original diversities may be reduced all those impertinent classifications of Gothic and Celtic tribes, white men, black men, red men. All the dwellers upon earth, "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites," flock hither, and do naturally fall in with one or other of these primary distinctions. The infinite superiority of the former, which I choose to designate as the *great race*, is discernible in their figure, port, and a certain instinctive sovereignty.

The latter are born degraded. "He shall serve his brethren." There is something in the air of one of this cast, lean and suspicious; contrasting with the open, trusting, generous manners of the other.

Observe who have been the greatest borrowers of all ages—Alcibiades—Falstaff—Sir Richard Steele—our late incomparable Brinsley—what a family likeness in all four!

What a careless, even deportment hath your borrower! what rosy gills! what a beautiful reliance on Providence doth he manifest,—taking no more thought than lilies! What contempt for money,—accounting it (yours and mine especially) no better than dross! What a liberal confounding of those pedantic distinctions of *meum* and *tuum!* or rather, what a noble simplification of language (beyond Tooke), resolving these supposed opposites into one clear, intelligible pronoun adjective!—What near approaches doth he make to the primitive *community*,—to the extent of one-half of the principle at least!—

He is the true taxer who "calleth all the world up to be taxed;" and the distance is as vast between him and *one of us*, as subsisted betwixt the Augustan Majesty and the poorest obolary Jew that paid it tribute-pittance at Jerusalem!—His exactions, too, have such a cheerful, voluntary air! So far removed from your sour parochial or state-gatherers,—those ink-horn varlets, who carry their want of welcome in their faces! He cometh to you with a smile, and troubleth you with no receipt; confining himself to no set season. Every day is his Candlemas, or his Feast of Holy Michael. He applieth the *lene tormentum* of a pleasant look to your purse,—which to that gentle warmth expands her silken leaves, as naturally as the cloak of the traveller, for which sun and wind contended! He is the true Propontic

which never ebbeth! The sea which taketh handsomely at each man's hand. In vain the victim, whom he delighteth to honour, struggles with destiny; he is in the net. Lend therefore cheerfully, O man ordained to lend—that thou lose not in the end, with thy worldly penny, the reversion promised. Combine not preposterously in thine own person the penalties of Lazarus and of Dives!—but, when thou seest the proper authority coming, meet it smilingly, as it were half-way. Come, a handsome sacrifice! See how light *he* makes of it! Strain not courtesies with a noble enemy.

Reflections like the foregoing were forced upon my mind by the death of my old friend, Ralph Bigod, Esq., who departed this life on Wednesday evening; dying, as he had lived, without much trouble. He boasted himself a descendant from mighty ancestors of that name, who heretofore held ducal dignities in this realm. In his actions and sentiments he belied not the stock to which he pretended. Early in life he found himself invested with ample revenues; which, with that noble disinterestedness which I have noticed as inherent in men of the *great race*, he took almost immediate measures entirely to dissipate and bring to nothing: for there is something revolting in the idea of a king holding a private purse; and the thoughts of Bigod were all regal. Thus furnished, by the very act of disfurnishment; getting rid of the cumbersome luggage of riches, more apt (as one sings)

> To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
> Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise,

he set forth, like some Alexander, upon his great enterprise, "borrowing and to borrow!"

In his periegesis, or triumphant progress through-

out this island, it has been calculated that he laid a tythe part of the inhabitants under contribution. I reject this estimate as greatly exaggerated:—but having had the honour of accompanying my friend, divers times, in his perambulations about this vast city, I own I was greatly struck at first with the prodigious number of faces we met, who claimed a sort of respectful acquaintance with us. He was one day so obliging as to explain the phenomenon. It seems, these were his tributaries; feeders of his exchequer; gentlemen, his good friends (as he was pleased to express himself), to whom he had occasionally been beholden for a loan. Their multitudes did in no way disconcert him. He rather took a pride in numbering them; and, with Comus, seemed pleased to be "stocked with so fair a herd."

With such sources, it was a wonder how he contrived to keep his treasury always empty. He did it by force of an aphorism, which he had often in his mouth, that "money kept longer than three days stinks." So he made use of it while it was fresh. A good part he drank away (for he was an excellent toss-pot), some he gave away, the rest he threw away, literally tossing and hurling it violently from him—as boys do burrs, or as if it had been infectious,—into ponds or ditches, or deep holes,—inscrutable cavities of the earth;—or he would bury it (where he would never seek it again) by a river's side under some bank, which (he would facetiously observe) paid no interest—but out away from him it must go peremptorily, as Hagar's offspring into the wilderness, while it was sweet. He never missed it. The streams were perennial which fed his fisc. When new supplies became necessary, the first person that had the felicity to fall in with him, friend or stranger, was sure to contribute to the deficiency. For Bigod had an *undeniable* way with him. He had a cheerful,

open exterior, a quick jovial eye, a bald forehead, just touched with grey (*cana fides*). He anticipated no excuse, and found none. And, waiving for a while my theory as to the *great race*, I would put it to the most untheorising reader, who may at times have disposable coin in his pocket, whether it is not more repugnant to the kindliness of his nature to refuse such a one as I am describing, than to say *no* to a poor petitionary rogue (your bastard borrower), who, by his mumping visnomy, tells you, that he expects nothing better; and, therefore, whose preconceived notions and expectations you do in reality so much less shock in the refusal.

When I think of this man; his fiery glow of heart; his swell of feeling; how magnificent, how *ideal* he was; how great at the midnight hour; and when I compare with him the companions with whom I have associated since, I grudge the saving of a few idle ducats, and think that I am fallen into the society of *lenders*, and *little men*.

To one like Elia, whose treasures are rather cased in leather covers than closed in iron coffers, there is a class of alienators more formidable than that which I have touched upon; I mean your *borrowers of books*—those mutilators of collections, spoilers of the symmetry of shelves, and creators of odd volumes. There is Comberbatch, matchless in his depredations!

That foul gap in the bottom shelf facing you, like a great eye-tooth knocked out—(you are now with me in my little back study in Bloomsbury, reader!) ——with the huge Switzer-like tomes on each side (like the Guildhall giants, in their reformed posture, guardant of nothing) once held the tallest of my folios, *Opera Bonaventuræ*, choice and massy divinity, to which its two supporters (school divinity also, but of a lesser calibre,—Bellarmine, and Holy Thomas),

showed but as dwarfs,—itself an Ascapart!—*that* Comberbatch abstracted upon the faith of a theory he holds, which is more easy, I confess, for me to suffer by than to refute, namely, that "the title to property in a book (my Bonaventure, for instance), is in exact ratio to the claimant's powers of understanding and appreciating the same." Should he go on acting upon this theory, which of our shelves is safe?

The slight vacuum in the left hand case—two shelves from the ceiling—scarcely distinguishable but by the quick eye of a loser——was whilom the commodious resting-place of Browne on Urn Burial. C. will hardly allege that he knows more about that treatise than I do, who introduced it to him, and was indeed the first (of the moderns) to discover its beauties—but so have I known a foolish lover to praise his mistress in the presence of a rival more qualified to carry her off than himself.—Just below, Dodsley's dramas want their fourth volume, where Vittoria Corombona is! The remainder nine are as distasteful as Priam's refuse sons, when the Fates *borrowed* Hector. Here stood the Anatomy of Melancholy, in sober state.—There loitered the Complete Angler; quiet as in life, by some stream side.—In yonder nook, John Buncle, a widower-volume, with "eyes closed," mourns his ravished mate.

One justice I must do my friend, that if he sometimes, like the sea, sweeps away a treasure, at another time, sea-like, he throws up as rich an equivalent to match it. I have a small under-collection of this nature (my friend's gatherings in his various calls), picked up, he has forgotten at what odd places, and deposited with as little memory at mine. I take in these orphans, the twice-deserted. These proselytes

" He will make one hearty meal."

of the gate are welcome as the true Hebrews. There they stand in conjunction ; natives, and naturalised. The latter seem as little disposed to inquire out their true lineage as I am.—I charge no warehouse-room for these deodands, nor shall ever put myself to the ungentlemanly trouble of advertising a sale of them to pay expenses.

To lose a volume to C. carries some sense and meaning in it. You are sure that he will make one hearty meal on your viands, if he can give no account of the platter after it. But what moved thee, way-

ward, spiteful K., to be so importunate to carry off with thee, in spite of tears and adjurations to thee to forbear, the Letters of that princely woman, the thrice noble Margaret Newcastle?—knowing at the time, and knowing that I knew also, thou most assuredly wouldst never turn over one leaf of the illustrious folio:—what but the mere spirit of contradiction, and childish love of getting the better of thy friend?—Then, worst cut of all! to transport it with thee to the Gallican land—

> Unworthy land to harbour such a sweetness,
> A virtue in which all ennobling thoughts dwelt,
> Pure thoughts, kind thoughts, high thoughts, her sex's wonder!

——hadst thou not thy play-books, and books of jests and fancies, about thee, to keep thee merry, even as thou keepest all companies with thy quips and mirthful tales?—Child of the Green-room, it was unkindly done of thee. Thy wife, too, that part-French, better-part Englishwoman!—that *she* could fix upon no other treatise to bear away in kindly token of remembering us, than the works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brook—of which no Frenchman, nor woman of France, Italy, or England, was ever by nature constituted to comprehend a tittle! *Was there not Zimmerman on Solitude?*

Reader, if haply thou art blessed with a moderate collection, be shy of showing it; or if thy heart overfloweth to lend them, lend thy books; but let it be to such a one as S. T. C.—he will return them (generally anticipating the time appointed) with usury; enriched with annotations, tripling their value. I have had experience. Many are these precious MSS. of his—(in *matter* oftentimes, and almost in *quantity* not unfrequently, vying with the

originals)—in no very clerkly hand—legible in my Daniel; in old Burton; in Sir Thomas Browne; and those abstruser cogitations of the Greville, now, alas! wandering in Pagan lands——I counsel thee, shut not thy heart, nor thy library, against S. T. C.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

EVERY man hath two birth-days: two days, at least, in every year, which set him upon revolving the lapse of time, as it affects his mortal duration. The one is that which in an especial manner he termeth *his*. In the gradual desuetude of old observances, this custom of solemnizing our proper birth-day hath nearly passed away, or is left to children, who reflect nothing at all about the matter, nor understand any thing in it beyond cake and orange. But the birth of a New Year is of an interest too wide to be pretermitted by king or cobbler. No one ever regarded the First of January with indifference. It is that from which all date their time, and count upon what is left. It is the nativity of our common Adam.

Of all sound of all bells (bells, the music nighest bordering upon heaven)—most solemn and touching

is the peal which rings out the Old Year. I never hear it without a gathering-up of my mind to a concentration of all the images that have been diffused over the past twelvemonth; all I have done or suffered, performed or neglected—in that regretted time. I begin to know its worth, as when a person dies. It takes a personal colour; nor was it a poetical flight in a contemporary, when he exclaimed

I saw the skirts of the departing Year.

It is no more than what in sober sadness every one of us seems to be conscious of, in that awful leave-taking. I am sure I felt it, and all felt it with me, last night; though some of my companions affected rather to manifest an exhilaration at the birth of the coming year, than any very tender regrets for the decease of its predecessor. But I am none of those who

Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.

I am naturally, beforehand, shy of novelties; new books, new faces, new years,—from some mental twist which makes it difficult in me to face the prospective. I have almost ceased to hope; and am sanguine only in the prospects of other (former) years. I plunge into foregone visions and conclusions. I encounter pell-mell with past disappointments. I am armour-proof against old discouragements. I forgive, or overcome in fancy, old adversaries. I play over again *for love*, as the gamesters phrase it, games, for which I once paid so dear. I would scarce now have any of those untoward accidents and events of my life reversed. I would no more alter them than the incidents of some well-contrived novel. Methinks, it is better that I should have pined away seven of my goldenest years, when I was thrall to the

fair hair, and fairer eyes, of Alice W——n, than that so passionate a love-adventure should be lost. It was better that our family should have missed that legacy, which old Dorrell cheated us of, than that I should have at this moment two thousand pounds *in banco*, and be without the idea of that specious old rogue.

In a degree beneath manhood, it is my infirmity to look back upon those early days. Do I advance a paradox, when I say, that, skipping over the intervention of forty years, a man may have leave to love *himself*, without the imputation of self-love?

If I know aught of myself, no one whose mind is introspective—and mine is painfully so—can have a less respect for his present identity, than I have for the man Elia. I know him to be light, and vain, and humorsome; a notorious * * *; addicted to * * * *: averse from counsel, neither taking it nor offering it;—* * * besides; a stammering buffoon; what you will; lay it on, and spare not; I subscribe to it all, and much more, than thou canst be willing to lay at his door———but for the child Elia—that "other me," there, in the back-ground—I must take leave to cherish the remembrance of that young master—with as little reference, I protest, to this stupid changeling of five-and-forty, as if it had been a child of some other house, and not of my parents. I can cry over its patient small-pox at five, and rougher medicaments. I can lay its poor fevered head upon the sick pillow at Christ's, and wake with it in surprise at the gentle posture of maternal tenderness hanging over it, that unknown had watched its sleep. I know how it shrank from any the least colour of falsehood.—God help thee, Elia, how art thou changed! Thou art sophisticated.—I know how honest, how courageous (for a weakling) it was—how religious, how imaginative, how hopeful!

From what have I not fallen, if the child I remember was indeed myself,—and not some dissembling guardian, presenting a false identity, to give the rule to my unpractised steps, and regulate the tone of my moral being!

That I am fond of indulging, beyond a hope of sympathy, in such retrospection, may be the symptom of some sickly idiosyncrasy. Or is it owing to another cause; simply, that being without wife or family, I have not learned to project myself enough out of myself; and having no offspring of my own to dally with, I turn back upon memory, and adopt my own early idea, as my heir and favourite? If these speculations seem fantastical to thee, reader—(a busy man, perchance), if I tread out of the way of thy sympathy, and am singularly-conceited only, I retire, impenetrable to ridicule, under the phantom cloud of Elia.

The elders, with whom I was brought up, were of a character not likely to let slip the sacred observance of any old institution; and the ringing out of the Old Year was kept by them with circumstances of peculiar ceremony.—In those days the sound of those midnight chimes, though it seemed to raise hilarity in all around me, never failed to bring a train of pensive imagery into my fancy. Yet I then scarce conceived what it meant, or thought of it as a reckoning that concerned me. Not childhood alone, but the young man till thirty, never feels practically that he is mortal. He knows it indeed, and, if need were, he could preach a homily on the fragility of life; but he brings it not home to himself, any more than in a hot June we can appropriate to our imagination the freezing days of December. But now, shall I confess a truth?—I feel these audits but too powerfully. I begin to count the probabilities of my

duration, and to grudge at the expenditure of moments and shortest periods, like miser's farthings. In proportion as the years both lessen and shorten, I set more count upon their periods, and would fain lay my ineffectual finger upon the spoke of the great wheel. I am not content to pass away "like a weaver's shuttle." Those metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity; and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth; the face of town and country; the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here. I am content to stand still at the age to which I am arrived; I, and my friends: to be no younger, no richer, no handsomer. I do not want to be weaned by age; or drop, like mellow fruit, as they say, into the grave.—Any alteration, on this earth of mine, in diet or in lodging, puzzles and discomposes me. My household-gods plant a terrible fixed foot, and are not rooted up without blood. They do not willingly seek Lavinian shores. A new state of being staggers me.

Sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful glass, and candle-light, and fire-side conversations, and innocent vanities, and jests, and *irony itself*—do these things go out with life?

Can a ghost laugh, or shake his gaunt sides, when you are pleasant with him?

And you, my midnight darlings, my Folios! must I part with the intense delight of having you (huge armfuls) in my embraces? Must knowledge come to me, if it come at all, by some awkward experi-

ment of intuition, and no longer by this familiar process of reading?

Shall I enjoy friendships there, wanting the smiling indications which point me to them here,—the recognisable face—the "sweet assurance of a look"—?

In winter this intolerable disinclination to dying—to give it its mildest name—does more especially haunt and beset me. In a genial August noon, beneath a sweltering sky, death is almost problematic. At those times do such poor snakes as myself enjoy an immortality. Then we expand and burgeon. Then are we as strong again, as valiant again, as wise again, and a great deal taller. The blast that nips and shrinks me, puts me in thoughts of death. All things allied to the insubstantial, wait upon that master feeling; cold, numbness, dreams, perplexity; moonlight itself, with its shadowy and spectral appearances,—that cold ghost of the sun, or Phœbus' sickly sister, like that innutritious one denounced in the Canticles:—I am none of her minions—I hold with the Persian.

Whatsoever thwarts, or puts me out of my way, brings death into my mind. All partial evils, like humours, run into that capital plague-sore.—I have heard some profess an indifference to life. Such hail the end of their existence as a port of refuge; and speak of the grave as of some soft arms, in which they may slumber as on a pillow. Some have wooed death — — — but out upon thee, I say, thou foul, ugly phantom! I detest, abhor, execrate, and (with Friar John) give thee to six-score thousand devils, as in no instance to be excused or tolerated, but shunned as a universal viper; to be branded, proscribed, and spoken evil of! In no way can I be brought to digest thee, thou thin melancholy *Privation*, or more frightful and confounding *Positive!*

"Impertinent and misbecoming familiarities inscribed upon your ordinary tombstones."

Those antidotes, prescribed against the fear of thee, are altogether frigid and insulting, like thyself. For what satisfaction hath a man, that he shall "lie down with kings and emperors in death," who in his lifetime never greatly coveted the society of such bedfellows?—or, forsooth, that, "so shall the fairest face appear?"—why, to comfort me, must Alice W——n be a goblin? More than all, I conceive disgust at those impertinent and misbecoming familiarities, inscribed upon your ordinary tombstones. Every dead man must take upon himself to be lecturing me

with his odious truism, that "such as he now is, I must shortly be." Not so shortly, friend, perhaps, as thou imaginest. In the meantime I am alive. I move about. I am worth twenty of thee. Know thy betters! Thy New Years' Days are past. I survive, a jolly candidate for 1821. Another cup of wine—and while that turn-coat bell, that just now mournfully chanted the obsequies of 1820 departed, with changed notes lustily rings in a successor, let us attune to its peal the song made on a like occasion, by hearty, cheerful Mr Cotton.—

THE NEW YEAR

Hark, the cock crows, and yon bright star
Tells us, the day himself's not far;
And see where, breaking from the night,
He gilds the western hills with light.
With him old Janus doth appear,
Peeping into the future year,
With such a look as seems to say,
The prospect is not good that way.
Thus do we rise ill sights to see,
And 'gainst ourselves to prophesy;
When the prophetic fear of things
A more tormenting mischief brings,
More full of soul-tormenting gall,
Than direst mischiefs can befall.
But stay! but stay! methinks my sight,
Better inform'd by clearer light,
Discerns sereneness in that brow,
That all contracted seem'd but now.
His revers'd face may show distaste,
And frown upon the ills are past;
But that which this way looks is clear,
And smiles upon the New-born Year.
He looks too from a place so high,
The Year lies open to his eye;

And all the moments open are
To the exact discoverer.
Yet more and more he smiles upon
The happy revolution.
Why should we then suspect or fear
The influences of a year,
So smiles upon us the first morn,
And speaks us good so soon as born?
Plague on't! the last was ill enough,
This cannot but make better proof;
Or, at the worst, as we brush'd through
The last, why so we may this too;
And then the next in reason shou'd
Be superexcellently good:
For the worst ills (we daily see)
Have no more perpetuity,
Than the best fortunes that do fall;
Which also bring us wherewithal
Longer their being to support,
Than those do of the other sort:
And who has one good year in three,
And yet repines at destiny,
Appears ungrateful in the case,
And merits not the good he has.
Then let us welcome the New Guest
With lusty brimmers of the best;
Mirth always should Good Fortune meet,
And renders e'en Disaster sweet:
And though the Princess turn her back,
Let us but line ourselves with sack,
We better shall by far hold out,
Till the next Year she face about.

How say you, reader—do not these verses smack of the rough magnanimity of the old English vein? Do they not fortify like a cordial; enlarging the heart, and productive of sweet blood, and generous spirits, in the concoction? Where be those puling fears of death, just now expressed or affected?—Passed like a cloud—absorbed in the purging sunlight

of clear poetry—clean washed away by a wave of genuine Helicon, your only Spa for these hypochondries—And now another cup of the generous! and a merry New Year, and many of them, to you all, my masters!

MRS. BATTLE'S OPINIONS ON WHIST

"A CLEAR fire, a clean hearth, and the rigour of the game." This was the celebrated *wish* of old Sarah Battle (now with God) who, next to her devotions, loved a good game at whist. She was none of your lukewarm gamesters, your half and half players, who have no objection to take a hand, if you want one to make up a rubber; who affirm that they have no pleasure in winning; that they like to win one game and lose another; that they can

while away an hour very agreeably at a card-table, but are indifferent whether they play or no; and will desire an adversary, who has slipt a wrong card, to take it up and play another. These insufferable triflers are the curse of a table. One of these flies will spoil a whole pot. Of such it may be said, that they do not play at cards, but only play at playing at them.

Sarah Battle was none of that breed. She detested them, as I do, from her heart and soul; and would not, save upon a striking emergency, willingly seat herself at the same table with them. She loved a thorough-paced partner, a determined enemy. She took, and gave, no concessions. She hated favours. She never made a revoke, nor ever passed it over in her adversary without exacting the utmost forfeiture. She fought a good fight: cut and thrust. She held not her good sword (her cards) "like a dancer." She sat bolt upright; and neither showed you her cards, nor desired to see yours. All people have their blind side—their superstitions; and I have heard her declare, under the rose, that Hearts was her favourite suit.

I never in my life—and I knew Sarah Battle many of the best years of it—saw her take out her snuff-box when it was her turn to play; or snuff a candle in the middle of a game; or ring for a servant, till it was fairly over. She never introduced or connived at, miscellaneous conversation during its process. As she emphatically observed, cards were cards; and if I ever saw unmingled distaste in her fine last-century countenance, it was at the airs of a young gentleman of a literary turn, who had been with difficulty persuaded to take a hand; and who, in his excess of candour, declared, that he thought there was no harm in unbending the mind now and then, after serious studies, in recreations of that kind! She

could not bear to have her noble occupation, to which she wound up her faculties, considered in that light. It was her business, her duty, the thing she came into the world to do,—and she did it. She unbent her mind afterwards—over a book.

Pope was her favourite author: his Rape of the Lock her favourite work. She once did me the favour to play over with me (with the cards) his celebrated game of Ombre in that poem; and to explain to me how far it agreed with, and in what points it would be found to differ from, tradrille. Her illustrations were apposite and poignant; and I had the pleasure of sending the substance of them to Mr Bowles: but I suppose they came too late to be inserted among his ingenious notes upon that author.

Quadrille, she has often told me, was her first love; but whist had engaged her maturer esteem. The former, she said, was showy and specious, and likely to allure young persons. The uncertainty and quick shifting of partners—a thing which the constancy of whist abhors; the dazzling supremacy and regal investiture of Spadille—absurd, as she justly observed, in the pure aristocracy of whist, where his crown and garter gave him no proper power above his brother-nobility of the Aces;—the giddy vanity, so taking to the inexperienced, of playing alone;—above all, the overpowering attractions of a *Sans Prendre Vole*, —to the triumph of which there is certainly nothing parallel or approaching, in the contingencies of whist; —all these, she would say, make quadrille a game of captivation to the young and enthusiastic. But whist was the *solider* game: that was her word. It was a long meal; not like quadrille, a feast of snatches. One or two rubbers might co-extend in duration with an evening. They gave time to form rooted friendships, to cultivate steady enmities. She despised the chance-started, capricious, and ever fluc-

tuating alliances of the other. The skirmishes of quadrille, she would say, reminded her of the petty ephemeral embroilments of the little Italian states, depicted by Machiavel; perpetually changing postures and connexions; bitter foes to-day, sugared darlings to-morrow; kissing and scratching in a breath;—but the wars of whist were comparable to the long, steady, deep-rooted, rational, antipathies of the great French and English nations.

A grave simplicity was what she chiefly admired in her favourite game. There was nothing silly in it, like the nob in cribbage—nothing superfluous. No *flushes*—that most irrational of all pleas that a reasonable being can set up:—that any one should claim four by virtue of holding cards of the same mark and colour, without reference to the playing of the game, or the individual worth or pretensions of the cards themselves! She held this to be a solecism; as pitiful an ambition at cards as alliteration is in authorship. She despised superficiality, and looked deeper than the colours of things. Suits were soldiers, she would say, and must have a uniformity of array to distinguish them; but what should we say to a foolish squire who should claim a merit for dressing up his tenantry in red jackets, that never were to be marshalled—never to take the field?—She even wished that whist were more simple than it is; and, in my mind would have stript it of some appendages, which, in the state of human frailty, may be venially, and even commendably allowed of. She saw no reason for the deciding of the trump by the turn of the card. Why not one suit always trumps?—Why two colours, when the mark of the suits would have sufficiently distinguished them without it?—

"But the eye my dear Madam, is agreeably refreshed with the variety. Man is not a creature of

pure reason—he must have his senses delightfully appealed to. We see it in Roman Catholic countries, where the music and the paintings draw in many to worship, whom your quaker spirit of unsensualizing would have kept out.—You, yourself, have a pretty collection of paintings—but confess to me, whether, walking in your gallery at Sandham, among those clear Vandykes, or among the Paul Potters in the ante-room, you ever felt your bosom glow with an elegant delight, at all comparable to *that* you have it in your power to experience most evenings over a well-arranged assortment of the court cards?—the pretty antic habits, like heralds in a procession—the gay triumph-assuring scarlets—the contrasting deadly-killing sables—the 'hoary majesty of spades'—Pam in all his glory!—

"All these might be dispensed with; and, with their naked names upon the drab pasteboard, the game might go on very well, pictureless. But the *beauty* of cards would be extinguished for ever. Stripped of all that is imaginative in them, they must degenerate into mere gambling.—Imagine a dull deal board, or drum head, to spread them on, instead of that nice verdant carpet (next to nature's), fittest arena for those courtly combatants to play their gallant jousts and turneys in!—Exchange those delicately-turned ivory markers—(work of Chinese artist, unconscious of their symbol,—or as profanely slighting their true application as the arrantest Ephesian journeyman that turned out those little shrines for the goddess)—exchange them for little bits of leather (our ancestors' money) or chalk and a slate!"—

The old lady, with a smile, confessed the soundness of my logic; and to her approbation of my arguments on her favourite topic that evening, I have always fancied myself indebted for the legacy of a curious cribbage board, made of the finest Sienna

marble, which her maternal uncle (old Walter Plumer, whom I have elsewhere celebrated) brought with him from Florence :—this, and a trifle of five hundred pounds came to me at her death.

The former bequest (which I do not least value) I have kept with religious care ; though she herself, to confess a truth, was never greatly taken with cribbage. It was an essentially vulgar game, I have heard her say,—disputing with her uncle, who was very partial to it. She could never heartily bring her mouth to pronounce "*go*," or "*that's a go.*" She called it an ungrammatical game. The pegging teased her. I once knew her to forfeit a rubber (a five dollar stake), because she would not take advantage of the turn-up knave, which would have given it her, but which she must have claimed by the disgraceful tenure of declaring "*two for his heels.*" There is something extremely genteel in this sort of self-denial. Sarah Battle was a gentlewoman born.

Piquet she held the best game at the cards for two persons, though she would ridicule the pedantry of the terms—such as pique—repique—the capot—they savoured (she thought) of affectation. But games for two, or even three, she never greatly cared for. She loved the quadrate, or square. She would argue thus :—Cards are warfare : the ends are gain, with glory. But cards are war, in disguise of a sport : when single adversaries encounter, the ends proposed are too palpable. By themselves, it is too close a fight ; with spectators, it is not much bettered. No looker-on can be interested, except for a bet, and then it is a mere affair of money ; he cares not for your luck *sympathetically*, or for your play.—Three are still worse ; a mere naked war of every man against every man, as in cribbage, without league or alliance ; or a rotation of petty and contradictory interests, a succession of heartless leagues,

and not much more hearty infractions of them, as in tradrille. But in square games (*she meant whist*) all that is possible to be attained in card-playing is accomplished. There are the incentives of profit with honour, common to every species—though the *latter* can be but very imperfectly enjoyed in those other games, where the spectator is only feebly a participator. But the parties in whist are spectators and principals too. They are a theatre to themselves, and a looker-on is not wanted. He is rather worse than nothing, and an impertinence. Whist abhors neutrality, or interests beyond its sphere. You glory in some surprising stroke of skill or fortune, not because a cold—or even an interested—by-stander witnesses it, but because your *partner* sympathises in the contingency. You win for two. You triumph for two. Two are exalted. Two again are mortified; which divides their disgrace, as the conjunction doubles (by taking off the invidiousness) your glories. Two losing to two are better reconciled, than one to one in that close butchery. The hostile feeling is weakened by multiplying the channels. War becomes a civil game.—By such reasonings as these the old lady was accustomed to defend her favourite pastime.

No inducement could ever prevail upon her to play at any game, where chance entered into the composition, *for nothing*. Chance, she would argue —and here again, admire the subtlety of her conclusion !—chance is nothing, but where something else depends upon it. It is obvious, that cannot be *glory*. What rational cause of exultation could it give to a man to turn up size ace a hundred times together by himself? or before spectators, where no stake was depending ?—Make a lottery of a hundred thousand tickets with but one fortunate number—and what possible principle of our nature, except stupid wonder-

ment, could it gratify to gain that number as many times successively, without a prize?—Therefore she disliked the mixture of chance in backgammon, where it was not played for money. She called it foolish, and those people idiots, who were taken with a lucky hit under such circumstances. Games of pure skill were as little to her fancy. Played for a stake, they were a mere system of over-reaching. Played for glory, they were a mere setting of one man's wit,—his memory, or combination-faculty rather—against another's; like a mock-engagement at a review, bloodless and profitless.—She could not conceive a *game* wanting the spritely infusion of chance,—the handsome excuses of good fortune. Two people playing at chess in a corner of a room whilst whist was stirring in the centre, would inspire her with unsufferable horror and ennui. Those well-cut similitudes of Castles, and Knights, the *imagery* of the board, she would argue (and I think in this case justly), were entirely misplaced and senseless. Those hard head-contests can in no instance ally with the fancy. They reject form and colour. A pencil and dry slate (she used to say) were the proper arena for such combatants.

To those puny objectors against cards, as nurturing the bad passions, she would retort, that man is a gaming animal. He must be always trying to get the better in something or other:—that this passion can scarcely be more safely expended than upon a game at cards: that cards are a temporary illusion; in truth, a mere drama; for we do but *play* at being mightily concerned, where a few idle shillings are at stake, yet, during the illusion, we *are* as mightily concerned as those whose stake is crowns and kingdoms. They are a sort of dream-fighting; much ado; great battling, and little bloodshed; mighty means for disproportioned ends; quite as

"Those hard head-contests."

diverting, and a great deal more innoxious, than many of those more serious *games* of life, which men play, without esteeming them to be such.——

With great deference to the old lady's judgment on these matters, I think I have experienced some moments in my life, when playing at cards *for nothing* has even been very agreeable. When I am in sickness, or not in the best spirits, I sometimes call for the cards, and play a game at picquet *for love* with my cousin Bridget—Bridget Elia.

I grant there is something sneaking in it; but with a tooth-ache, or a sprained ankle,—when you are

subdued and humble,—you are glad to put up with an inferior spring of action.

There is such a thing in nature, I am convinced, as *sick whist.*—

I grant it is not the highest style of man—I deprecate the manes of Sarah Battle—she lives not, alas! to whom I should apologise.—

At such times, those *terms* which my old friend objected to, come in as something admissible.—I love to get a tierce or a quatorze, though they mean nothing. I am subdued to an inferior interest. Those shadows of winning amuse me.

That last game I had with my sweet cousin (I capotted her)—(dare I tell thee how foolish I am ?)—I wished it might have lasted for ever, though we gained nothing, and lost nothing, though it was a mere shade of play : I would be content to go on in that idle folly for ever. The pipkin should be ever boiling, that was to prepare the gentle lenitive to my foot, which Bridget was doomed to apply after the game was over : and, as I do not much relish appliances, there it should ever bubble. Bridget and I should be ever playing.

A CHAPTER ON EARS

I HAVE no ear.——

Mistake me not, reader,—nor imagine that I am by nature destitute of those exterior twin appendages, hanging ornaments, and (architecturally speaking) handsome volutes to the human capital. Better my mother had never borne me.—I am, I think, rather delicately than copiously provided with those conduits; and I feel no disposition to envy the mule for his plenty, or the mole for her exactness, in those ingenious labyrinthine inlets—those indispensable side-intelligencers.

Neither have I incurred, nor done any thing to incur, with Defoe, that hideous disfigurement, which constrained him to draw upon assurance—to feel "quite unabashed," and at ease upon that article. I was never, I thank my stars, in the pillory; nor, if I read them aright, is it within the compass of my destiny, that I ever should be.

When therefore I say that I have no ear, you will

understand me to mean—*for music*.—To say that this heart never melted at the concourse of sweet sounds, would be a foul self-libel.—"*Water parted from the sea*" never fails to move it strangely. So does "*In infancy*." But they were used to be sung at her harpsichord (the old-fashioned instrument in vogue in those days) by a gentlewoman—the gentlest, sure, that ever merited the appellation—the sweetest—why should I hesitate to name Mrs S——, once the blooming Fanny Weatheral of the Temple—who had power to thrill the soul of Elia, small imp as he was, even in his long coats; and to make him glow, tremble, and blush with a passion, that not faintly indicated the day-spring of that absorbing sentiment, which was afterwards destined to overwhelm and subdue his nature quite, for Alice W——n.

I even think that *sentimentally* I am disposed to harmony. But *organically* I am incapable of a tune. I have been practising "*God save the King*" all my life; whistling and humming of it over to myself in solitary corners; and am not yet arrived, they tell me, within many quavers of it. Yet hath the loyalty of Elia never been impeached.

I am not without suspicion, that I have an undeveloped faculty of music within me. For, thrumming, in my wild way, on my friend A.'s piano, the other morning, while he was engaged in an adjoining parlour,—on his return he was pleased to say, "*he thought it could not be the maid!*" On his first surprise at hearing the keys touched in somewhat an airy and masterful way, not dreaming of me, his suspicions had lighted on *Jenny*. But a grace, snatched from a superior refinement, soon convinced him that some being,—technically perhaps deficient, but higher informed from a principle common to all the fine arts,—had swayed the keys to a mood which Jenny,

with all her (less cultivated) enthusiasm, could never have elicited from them. I mention this as a proof of my friend's penetration and not with any view of disparaging Jenny.

Scientifically I could never be made to understand (yet have I taken some pains) what a note in music is; or how one note should differ from another. Much less in voices can I distinguish a soprano from a tenor. Only sometimes the thorough bass I contrive to guess at, from its being supereminently harsh and disagreeable. I tremble, however, for my misapplication of the simplest terms of *that* which I disclaim. While I profess my ignorance, I scarce know what to *say* I am ignorant of. I hate, perhaps, by misnomers. *Sostenuto* and *adagio* stand in the like relation of obscurity to me; and *Sol*, *Fa*, *Mi*, *Re*, is as conjuring as *Baralipton*.

It is hard to stand alone—in an age like this,—(constituted to the quick and critical perception of all harmonious combinations, I verily believe, beyond all preceding ages, since Jubal stumbled upon the gamut) —to remain, as it were, singly unimpressible to the magic influences of an art, which is said to have such an especial stroke at soothing, elevating, and refining the passions.—Yet rather than break the candid current of my confessions, I must avow to you, that I have received a great deal more pain than pleasure from this so cried-up faculty.

I am constitutionally susceptible of noises. A carpenter's hammer, in a warm summer noon, will fret me into more than midsummer madness. But those unconnected, unset sounds are nothing to the measured malice of music. The ear is passive to those single strokes; willingly enduring stripes, while it hath no task to con. To music it cannot be passive. It will strive—mine at least will—'spite of its inaptitude, to thrid the maze; like an unskilled eye pain-

fully poring upon hieroglyphics. I have sat through an Italian Opera, till, for sheer pain, and inexplicable anguish, I have rushed out into the noisiest places of the crowded streets, to solace myself with sounds, which I was not obliged to follow, and get rid of the distracting torment of endless, fruitless, barren attention! I take refuge in the unpretending assemblage of honest common-life sounds;—and the purgatory of the Enraged Musician becomes my paradise.

I have sat at an Oratorio (that profanation of the purposes of the cheerful playhouse) watching the faces of the auditory in the pit (what a contrast to Hogarth's Laughing Audience!) immoveable, or affecting some faint emotion,—till (as some have said, that our occupations in the next world will be but a shadow of what delighted us in this) I have imagined myself in some cold Theatre in Hades, where some of the *forms* of the earthly one should be kept up, with none of the *enjoyment*; or like that—

> ———Party in a parlour,
> All silent, and all DAMNED!

Above all, those insufferable concertos, and pieces of music, as they are called, do plague and embitter my apprehension.—Words are something; but to be exposed to an endless battery of mere sounds; to be long a dying, to lie stretched upon a rack of roses; to keep up languor by unintermitted effort; to pile honey upon sugar, and sugar upon honey, to an interminable tedious sweetness; to fill up sound with feeling, and strain ideas to keep pace with it; to gaze on empty frames, and be forced to make the pictures for yourself; to read a book, *all stops*, and be obliged to supply the verbal matter; to invent extempore tragedies to answer to the vague gestures of an inexplicable rambling mime—these are faint shadows of what I

have undergone from a series of the ablest-executed pieces of this empty *instrumental music*.

I deny not, that in the opening of a concert, I have experienced something vastly lulling and agreeable :—afterwards followeth the languor, and the oppression. Like that disappointing book in Patmos ; or, like the comings on of melancholy, described by Burton, doth music make her first insinuating approaches :—"Most pleasant it is to such as are melancholy given, to walk alone in some solitary grove, betwixt wood and water, by some brook side, and to meditate upon some delightsome and pleasant subject, which shall affect him most, *amabilis insania*, and *mentis gratissimus error*. A most incomparable delight to build castles in the air, to go smiling to themselves, acting an infinite variety of parts, which they suppose, and strongly imagine, they act, or that they see done.—So delightsome these toys at first, they could spend whole days and nights without sleep, even whole years in such contemplations, and fantastical meditations, which are like so many dreams, and will hardly be drawn from them—winding and unwinding themselves as so many clocks, and still pleasing their humours, until at last the SCENE TURNS UPON A SUDDEN, and they being now habituated to such meditations and solitary places, can endure no company, can think of nothing but harsh and distasteful subjects. Fear, sorrow, suspicion, *subrusticus pudor*, discontent, cares, and weariness of life, surprise them on a sudden, and they can think of nothing else : continually suspecting, no sooner are their eyes open, but this infernal plague of melancholy seizeth on them, and terrifies their souls, representing some dismal object to their minds ; which now, by no means, no labour, no persuasions they can avoid, they cannot be rid of it, they cannot resist."

Something like this "SCENE-TURNING" I have experienced at the evening parties, at the house of my

What a contrast to Hogarth's Laughing Audience!

good Catholic friend *Nov*——; who, by the aid of a capital organ, himself the most finished of players, converts his drawing-room into a chapel, his week days into Sundays, and these latter into minor heavens.[1]

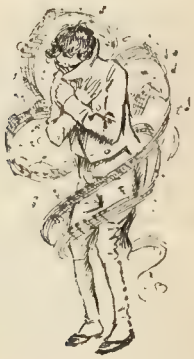
When my friend commences upon one of those solemn anthems, which peradventure struck upon my heedless ear, rambling in the side aisles of the dim abbey, some five and thirty years since, waking a new sense, and putting a soul of old religion into my young apprehension—(whether it be *that*, in which the psalmist, weary of the persecutions of bad men, wisheth to himself dove's wings—or *that other*, which, with a like measure of sobriety and pathos, inquireth by what means the young man shall best cleanse his mind)—a holy calm pervadeth me.—I am for the time

> ——————rapt above earth,
> And possess joys not promised at my birth.

But when this master of the spell, not content to have laid a soul prostrate, goes on, in his power, to inflict more bliss than lies in her capacity to receive, —impatient to overcome her "earthly" with his "heavenly,"—still pouring in, for protracted hours, fresh waves and fresh from the sea of sound, or from that inexhausted *German* ocean, above which, in triumphant progress, dolphin-seated, ride those Arions *Haydn* and *Mozart*, with their attendant tritons, *Bach*, *Beethoven*, and a countless tribe, whom to attempt to reckon up would but plunge me again in the deeps,—I stagger under the weight of harmony, reeling to and fro at my wit's end;—clouds, as of frankincense, oppress me—priests, altars, censers, dazzle before me—the genius of *his* religion hath me in her toils—a shadowy triple tiara invests the

[1] I have been there, and still would go;
'Tis like a little heaven below.—*Dr Watts.*

brow of my friend, late so naked, so ingenuous—he is Pope,—and by him sits, like as in the anomaly of dreams, a she-Pope too,—tri-coroneted like himself!—I am converted, and yet a Protestant;—at once *malleus hereticorum*, and myself grand heresiarch: or three heresies centre in my person:—I am Marcion, Ebion, and Cerinthus—Gog and Magog—what not? —till the coming in of the friendly supper-tray dissipates the figment, and a draught of true Lutheran beer (in which chiefly my friend shows himself no bigot) at once reconciles me to the rationalities of a purer faith; and restores to me the genuine unterrifying aspects of my pleasant-countenanced host and hostess.



ALL FOOLS' DAY

THE compliments of the season to my worthy masters, and a merry first of April to us all!

Many happy returns of this day to you—and you—and *you*, Sir—nay, never frown, man, nor put a long face upon the matter. Do not we know one another? what need of ceremony among friends? we have all a touch of *that same*—you understand me—a speck of the motley. Beshrew the man who on such a day as this, the *general festival*, should affect to stand aloof. I am none of those sneakers. I am free of the corporation, and care not who knows it. He that meets me in the forest to-day, shall meet with no wise-acre, I can tell him. *Stultus sum.* Translate me that, and take the meaning of it to yourself for your pains. What, man, we have four quarters of the globe on our side, at the least computation.

Fill us a cup of that sparkling gooseberry—we will drink no wise, melancholy, politic port on this day—and let us troll the catch of Amiens—*duc ad me—duc ad me*—how goes it?

Here shall he see
Gross fools as he.

Now would I give a trifle to know historically and authentically, who was the greatest fool that ever lived. I would certainly give him in a bumper. Marry, of the present breed, I think I could without much difficulty name you the party.

Remove your cap a little further, if you please; it hides my bauble. And now each man bestride his hobby, and dust away his bells to what tune he pleases. I will give you, for my part,

———The crazy old church clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

Good master Empedocles, you are welcome. It is long since you went a salamander-gathering down Ætna. Worse than samphire-picking by some odds. 'Tis a mercy your worship did not singe your mustachios.

Ha! Cleombrotus! and what salads in faith did you light upon at the bottom of the Mediterranean? You were founder, I take it, of the disinterested sect of the Calenturists.

Gebir, my old free-mason, and prince of plasterers at Babel, bring in your trowel, most Ancient Grand! You have claim to a seat here at my right hand, as patron of the stammerers. You left your work, if I remember Herodotus correctly, at eight hundred million toises, or thereabout, above the level of the sea. Bless us, what a long bell you must have pulled, to call your top workmen to their nuncheon on the low grounds of Sennaar. Or did you send up your garlick and onions by a rocket? I am a rogue if I am not ashamed to show you our Monument on Fish-street Hill, after your altitudes. Yet we think it somewhat.

What, the magnanimous Alexander in tears?—

cry, baby, put its finger in its eye, it shall have another globe, round as an orange, pretty moppet!

Mister Adams——'odso, I honour your coat—pray do us the favour to read to us that sermon, which you lent to Mistress Slipslop—the twenty and second in your portmanteau there—on Female Incontinence—the same—it will come in most irrelevantly and impertinently seasonable to the time of the day.

Good Master Raymund Lully, you look wise. Pray correct that error.——

Duns, spare your definitions. I must fine you a bumper, or a paradox. We will have nothing said or done syllogistically this day. Remove those logical forms, waiter, that no gentleman break the tender shins of his apprehension stumbling across them.

Master Stephen, you are late.—Ha! Cokes, is it you?—Aguecheek, my dear knight, let me pay my devoir to you.—Master Shallow, your worship's poor servant to command.—Master Silence, I will use few words with you.—Slender, it shall go hard if I edge not you in somewhere.—You six will engross all the poor wit of the company to-day.—I know it, I know it.

Ha! honest R——, my fine old Librarian of Ludgate, time out of mind, art thou here again? Bless thy doublet, it is not over-new, threadbare as thy stories:—what dost thou flitting about the world at this rate?—Thy customers are extinct, defunct, bed-rid, have ceased to read long ago.—Thou goest still among them, seeing if, peradventure, thou canst hawk a volume or two—Good Granville S——, thy last patron, is flown.

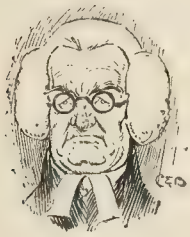
> King Pandion, he is dead,
> All thy friends are lapt in lead.—

Nevertheless, noble R——, come in, and take your seat here, between Armado and Quisada: for in true

courtesy, in gravity, in fantastic smiling to thyself, in courteous smiling upon others, in the goodly ornature of well-apparelled speech, and the commendation of wise sentences, thou art nothing inferior to those accomplished Dons of Spain. The spirit of chivalry forsake me for ever, when I forget thy singing the song of Macheath, which declares that he might be *happy with either*, situated between those two ancient spinsters—when I forget the inimitable formal love which thou didst make, turning now to the one, and now to the other, with that Malvolian smile—as if Cervantes, not Gay, had written it for his hero; and as if thousands of periods must revolve, before the mirror of courtesy could have given his invidious preference between a pair of so goodly-propertied and meritorious-equal damsels. * * * * *

To descend from these altitudes, and not to protract our Fools' Banquet beyond its appropriate day, —for I fear the second of April is not many hours distant—in sober verity I will confess a truth to thee, reader. I love a *Fool*—as naturally, as if I were of kith and kin to him. When a child, with child-like apprehensions, that dived not below the surface of the matter, I read those *Parables*—not guessing at their involved wisdom—I had more yearnings towards that simple architect, that built his house upon the sand, than I entertained for his more cautious neighbour; I grudged at the hard censure pronounced upon the quiet soul that kept his talent; and—prizing their simplicity beyond the more provident, and, to my apprehension, somewhat *unfeminine* wariness of their competitors—I felt a kindliness, that almost amounted to a *tendre*, for those five thoughtless virgins.—I have never made an acquaintance since, that lasted; or a friendship, that answered; with any that had not some tincture of the absurd in their characters. I venerate an honest obliquity of under-

standing. The more laughable blunders a man shall commit in your company, the more tests he giveth you, that he will not betray or overreach you. I love the safety, which a palpable hallucination warrants; the security, which a word out of season ratifies. And take my word for this, reader, and say a fool told it you, if you please, that he who hath not a dram of folly in his mixture, hath pounds of much worse matter in his composition. It is observed, that "the foolisher the fowl or fish—woodcocks,—dotterels,—cod's-heads, &c., the finer the flesh thereof," and what are commonly the world's received fools, but such whereof the world is not worthy? and what have been some of the kindliest patterns of our species, but so many darlings of absurdity, minions of the goddess, and her white boys?—Reader, if you wrest my words beyond their fair construction, it is you, and not I, that are the *April Fool.*



A QUAKER'S MEETING

Still-born Silence! thou that art
Flood-gate of the deeper heart!
Offspring of a heavenly kind!
Frost o' the mouth, and thaw o' the mind!
Secrecy's confident, and he
Who makes religion mystery!
Admiration's speaking'st tongue!
Leave, thy desert shades among,
Reverend hermits' hallowed cells,
Where retired devotion dwells!
With thy enthusiasms come,
Seize our tongues, and strike us dumb![1]

READER, would'st thou know what true peace and quiet mean; would'st thou find a refuge from the noises and clamours of the multitude; would'st thou enjoy at once solitude and society; would'st thou possess the depth of thine own spirit in stillness, without being shut out from the consolatory faces of thy species; would'st thou be alone, and yet accompanied; solitary, yet not desolate; singular, yet not without some to keep thee in countenance;

[1] From "Poems of all sorts," by Richard Fleckno, 1653.

a unit in aggregate; a simple in composite:—come with me into a Quaker's Meeting.

Dost thou love silence deep as that "before the winds were made?" go not out into the wilderness, descend not into the profundities of the earth; shut not up thy casements; nor pour wax into the little cells of thy ears, with little-faith'd self-mistrusting Ulysses.—Retire with me into a Quaker's Meeting.

For a man to refrain even from good words, and to hold his peace, it is commendable; but for a multitude, it is great mastery.

What is the stillness of the desert, compared with this place? what the uncommunicating muteness of fishes?—here the goddess reigns and revels.—"Boreas, and Cesias, and Argestes loud," do not with their inter-confounding uproars more augment the brawl —nor the waves of the blown Baltic with their clubbed sounds—than their opposite (Silence her sacred self) is multiplied and rendered more intense by numbers, and by sympathy. She too hath her deeps, that call unto deeps. Negation itself hath a positive more or less; and closed eyes would seem to obscure the great obscurity of midnight.

There are wounds, which an imperfect solitude cannot heal. By imperfect I mean that which a man enjoyeth by himself. The perfect is that which he can sometimes attain in crowds, but nowhere so absolutely as in a Quaker's Meeting.—Those first hermits did certainly understand this principle, when they retired into Egyptian solitudes, not singly, but in shoals, to enjoy one another's want of conversation. The Carthusian is bound to his brethren by this agreeing spirit of incommunicativeness. In secular occasions, what so pleasant as to be reading a book through a long winter evening, with a friend sitting by—say, a wife—he, or she, too, (if that be probable,) reading another, without interruption, or oral com-

munication?—can there be no sympathy without the gabble of words?—away with this inhuman, shy, single, shade-and-cavern-haunting solitariness. Give me, Master Zimmerman, a sympathetic solitude.

To pace alone in the cloisters, or side aisles of some cathedral, time-stricken;

> Or under hanging mountains,
> Or by the fall of fountains;

is but a vulgar luxury, compared with that which those enjoy, who come together for the purpose of more complete, abstracted solitude. This is the loneliness "to be felt."—The Abbey Church of Westminster hath nothing so solemn, so spirit-soothing, as the naked walls and benches of a Quaker's Meeting. Here are no tombs, no inscriptions,

> ———sands, ignoble things,
> Dropt from the ruined sides of kings—

but here is something, which throws Antiquity herself into the foreground—SILENCE—eldest of things—language of old Night—primitive Discourser—to which the insolent decays of mouldering grandeur have but arrived by a violent, and, as we may say, unnatural progression.

> How reverend is the view of these hushed heads,
> Looking tranquillity!

Nothing-plotting, nought-caballing, unmischievous synod! convocation without intrigue! parliament without debate! what a lesson dost thou read to council, and to consistory! if my pen treat of you lightly—as haply it will wander—yet my spirit hath gravely felt the wisdom of your custom, when sitting among you in deepest peace, which some out-welling tears would rather confirm than disturb, I have reverted to the times of your beginnings, and the

sowings of the seed by Fox and Dewesbury.—I have witnessed that, which brought before my eyes your heroic tranquillity, inflexible to the rude jests and serious violences of the insolent soldiery, republican or royalist, sent to molest you—for ye sate betwixt the fires of two persecutions, the out-cast and off-scouring of church and presbytery.—I have seen the reeling sea-ruffian, who had wandered into your receptacle, with the avowed intention of disturbing your quiet, from the very spirit of the place receive in a moment a new heart, and presently sit among ye as a lamb amidst lambs. And I remembered Penn before his accusers, and Fox in the bail-dock, where he was lifted up in spirit, as he tells us, and "the Judge and the Jury became as dead men under his feet."

Reader, if you are not acquainted with it, I would recommend to you, above all church-narratives, to read Sewel's History of the Quakers. It is in folio, and is the abstract of the journals of Fox, and the primitive Friends. It is far more edifying and affecting than any thing you will read of Wesley and his colleagues. Here is nothing to stagger you, nothing to make you mistrust, no suspicion of alloy, no drop or dreg of the worldly or ambitious spirit. You will here read the true story of that much-injured, ridiculed man (who perhaps hath been a by-word in your mouth,)—James Naylor: what dreadful sufferings, with what patience, he endured even to the boring through of his tongue with red-hot irons without a murmur; and with what strength of mind, when the delusion he had fallen into, which they stigmatised for blasphemy, had given way to clearer thoughts, he could renounce his error, in a strain of the beautifullest humility, yet keep his first grounds, and be a Quaker still!—so different from the practice of your common converts from enthusiasm, who,

when they apostatize, *apostatize all*, and think they can never get far enough from the society of their former errors, even to the renunciation of some saving truths, with which they had been mingled, not implicated.

Get the Writings of John Woolman by heart; and love the early Quakers.

How far the followers of these good men in our days have kept to the primitive spirit, or in what proportion they have substituted formality for it, the Judge of Spirits can alone determine. I have seen faces in their assemblies, upon which the dove sate visibly brooding. Others again I have watched, when my thoughts should have been better engaged, in which I could possibly detect nothing but a blank inanity. But quiet was in all, and the disposition to unanimity, and the absence of the fierce controversial workings.—If the spiritual pretensions of the Quakers have abated, at least they make few pretences. Hypocrites they certainly are not, in their preaching. It is seldom indeed that you shall see one get up amongst them to hold forth. Only now and then a trembling, female, generally *ancient*, voice is heard—you cannot guess from what part of the meeting it proceeds—with a low, buzzing, musical sound, laying out a few words which "she thought might suit the condition of some present," with a quaking diffidence, which leaves no possibility of supposing that any thing of female vanity was mixed up, where the tones were so full of tenderness, and a restraining modesty.—The men, for what I have observed, speak seldomer.

Once only, and it was some years ago, I witnessed a sample of the old Foxian orgasm. It was a man of giant stature, who, as Wordsworth phrases it, might have danced "from head to foot equipt in iron mail." His frame was of iron too. But *he* was malleable. I saw him shake all over with the spirit—I dare not

"The strong man bowed down"

say, of delusion. The strivings of the outer man were unutterable—he seemed not to speak, but to be spoken from. I saw the strong man bowed down, and his knees to fail—his joints all seemed loosening —it was a figure to set off against Paul Preaching—the words he uttered were few, and sound—he was evidently resisting his will—keeping down his own word-wisdom with more mighty effort, than the world's orators strain for theirs. "He had been a WIT in his youth," he told us, with expressions of a sober remorse. And it was not till long after the impression had begun to wear away, that I was enabled, with something like a smile, to recall the striking incongruity of the confession—understanding the term in its worldly acceptation—with the frame and physiognomy of the person before me. His brow would have scared away the Levities—the Jocos Risus-que—faster than the Loves fled the face of Dis at Enna. By *wit*, even in his youth, I will be sworn he understood something far within the limits of an allowable liberty.

More frequently the Meeting is broken up without a word having been spoken. But the mind has been fed. You go away with a sermon, not made with hands. You have been in the milder caverns of Trophonius; or as in some den, where that fiercest and savagest of all wild creatures, the TONGUE, that unruly member, has strangely lain tied up and captive. You have bathed with stillness.—O when the spirit is sore fettered, even tired to sickness of the janglings, and nonsense noises of the world, what a balm and a solace it is, to go and seat yourself for a quiet half hour, upon some undisputed corner of a bench, among the gentle Quakers!

Their garb and stillness conjoined, present an uniformity, tranquil and herd-like—as in the pasture —"forty feeding like one."—

A QUAKER'S MEETING

The very garments of a Quaker seem incapable of receiving a soil ; and cleanliness in them to be something more than the absence of its contrary. Every Quakeress is a lily ; and when they come up in bands to their Whitsun-conferences, whitening the easterly streets of the Metropolis, from all parts of the United Kingdom, they show like troops of the Shining Ones.

THE OLD AND THE NEW SCHOOLMASTER

MY reading has been lamentably desultory and immethodical. Odd, out of the way, old English plays, and treatises, have supplied me with most of my notions, and ways of feeling. In every thing that relates to *science*, I am a whole Encyclopædia behind the rest of the world. I should have scarcely cut a figure among the franklins, or country gentlemen, in King John's days. I know less geography than a school-boy of six weeks' standing. To me a map of old Ortelius is as authentic as Arrowsmith. I do not know whereabout Africa merges into Asia; whether Ethiopia lie in one or other of those great divisions; nor can form the remotest conjecture of the position of New South Wales, or Van Diemen's Land. Yet do I hold a correspondence with a very dear friend in the first-named of these two Terræ Incognitæ. I have no astronomy. I do not know where to look for the Bear, or Charles's Wain; the place of any star; or the name of any of them at sight. I guess at Venus

only by her brightness—and if the sun on some portentous morn were to make his first appearance in the West, I verily believe, that, while all the world were gasping in apprehension about me, I alone should stand unterrified, from sheer incuriosity and want of observation. Of history and chronology I possess some vague points, such as one cannot help picking up in the course of miscellaneous study; but I never deliberately sat down to a chronicle, even of my own country. I have most dim apprehensions of the four great monarchies; and sometimes the Assyrian, sometimes the Persian, floats as *first* in my fancy. I make the wildest conjectures concerning Egypt, and her shepherd kings. My friend *M.*, with great pains-taking, got me to think I understood the first proposition in Euclid, but gave me over in despair at the second. I am entirely unacquainted with the modern languages; and, like a better man than myself, have "small Latin and less Greek." I am a stranger to the shapes and texture of the commonest trees, herbs, flowers—not from the circumstance of my being town-born—for I should have brought the same inobservant spirit into the world with me, had I first seen it "on Devon's leafy shores,"—and am no less at a loss among purely town-objects, tools, engines, mechanic processes.—Not that I affect ignorance—but my head has not many mansions, nor spacious; and I have been obliged to fill it with such cabinet curiosities as it can hold without aching. I sometimes wonder how I have passed my probation with so little discredit in the world, as I have done, upon so meagre a stock. But the fact is, a man may do very well with a very little knowledge, and scarce be found out, in mixed company; every body is so much more ready to produce his own, than to call for a display of your acquisitions. But in a *tête-à-tête* there is no shuffling.

The truth will out. There is nothing which I dread so much, as the being left alone for a quarter of an hour with a sensible, well-informed man, that does not know me. I lately got into a dilemma of this sort.—

In one of my daily jaunts between Bishopsgate and Shacklewell, the coach stopped to take up a staid-looking gentleman, about the wrong side of thirty, who was giving his parting directions (while the steps were adjusting), in a tone of mild authority, to a tall youth, who seemed to be neither his clerk, his son, nor his servant, but something partaking of all three. The youth was dismissed, and we drove on. As we were the sole passengers, he naturally enough addressed his conversation to me; and we discussed the merits of the fare, the civility and punctuality of the driver; the circumstance of an opposition coach having been lately set up, with the probabilities of its success—to all which I was enabled to return pretty satisfactory answers, having been drilled into this kind of etiquette by some years' daily practice of riding to and fro in the stage aforesaid—when he suddenly alarmed me by a startling question, whether I had seen the show of prize cattle that morning in Smithfield? Now as I had not seen it, and do not greatly care for such sort of exhibitions, I was obliged to return a cold negative. He seemed a little mortified, as well as astonished, at my declaration, as (it appeared) he was just come fresh from the sight, and doubtless had hoped to compare notes on the subject. However he assured me that I had lost a fine treat, as it far exceeded the show of last year. We were now approaching Norton Falgate, when the sight of some shop-goods *ticketed* freshened him up into a dissertation upon the cheapness of cottons this spring. I was now a little in heart, as the nature of my morning avocations had brought me into some

sort of familiarity with the raw material; and I was surprised to find how eloquent I was becoming on the state of the India market—when, presently, he dashed my incipient vanity to the earth at once, by inquiring whether I had ever made any calculation as to the value of the rental of all the retail shops in London. Had he asked of me, what song the Sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, I might, with Sir Thomas Browne, have hazarded a "wide solution."[1] My companion saw my embarrassment, and, the almshouses beyond Shoreditch just coming in view, with great good-nature and dexterity shifted his conversation to the subject of public charities; which led to the comparative merits of provision for the poor in past and present times, with observations on the old monastic institutions, and charitable orders;—but, finding me rather dimly impressed with some glimmering notions from old poetic associations, than strongly fortified with any speculations reducible to calculation on the subject, he gave the matter up; and, the country beginning to open more and more upon us, as we approached the turnpike at Kingsland (the destined termination of his journey), he put a home thrust upon me, in the most unfortunate position he could have chosen, by advancing some queries relative to the North Pole Expedition. While I was muttering out something about the Panorama of those strange regions (which I had actually seen), by way of parrying the question, the coach stopping relieved me from any further apprehensions. My companion getting out, left me in the comfortable possession of my ignorance; and I heard him, as he went off, putting questions to an outside passenger, who had alighted with him, regarding an epidemic disorder, that had been rife about Dalston; and which, my

[1] Urn Burial.

friend assured him, had gone through five or six schools in that neighbourhood. The truth now flashed upon me, that my companion was a schoolmaster; and that the youth, whom he had parted from at our first acquaintance, must have been one of the bigger boys, or the usher.—He was evidently a kind-hearted man, who did not seem so much desirous of provoking discussion by the questions which he put, as of obtaining information at any rate. It did not appear that he took any interest, either, in such kind of inquiries, for their own sake; but that he was in some way bound to seek for knowledge. A greenish-coloured coat, which he had on, forbade me to surmise that he was a clergyman. The adventure gave birth to some reflections on the difference between persons of his profession in past and present times.

Rest to the souls of those fine old Pedagogues; the breed, long since extinct, of the Lilys, and the Linacres; who believing that all learning was contained in the languages which they taught, and despising every other acquirement as superficial and useless, came to their task as to a sport! Passing from infancy to age, they dreamed away all their days as in a grammar-school. Revolving in a perpetual cycle of declensions, conjugations, syntaxes, and prosodies; renewing constantly the occupations which had charmed their studious childhood; rehearsing continually the part of the past; life must have slipped from them at last like one day. They were always in their first garden, reaping harvests of their golden time, among their *Flori* and their *Spicilegia;* in Arcadia still, but kings; the ferule of their sway not much harsher, but of like dignity with that mild sceptre attributed to king Basileus; the Greek and Latin, their stately Pamela and their Philoclea; with the occasional duncery of some untoward Tyro,

serving for a refreshing interlude of a Mopsa, or a clown Damætas!

With what a savour doth the Preface to Colet's, or (as it is sometimes called) Paul's "Accidence," set forth! "To exhort every man to the learning of grammar, that intendeth to attain the understanding of the tongues, wherein is contained a great treasury of wisdom and knowledge, it would seem but vain and lost labour; for so much as it is known, that nothing can surely be ended, whose beginning is either feeble or faulty; and no building be perfect, whereas the foundation and groundwork is ready to fall, and unable to uphold the burden of the frame." How well doth this stately preamble (comparable to those which Milton commendeth as "having been the usage to prefix to solemn law, then first promulgated by Solon, or Lycurgus") correspond with and illustrate that pious zeal for conformity, expressed in a succeeding clause, which would fence about grammar-rules with the severity of faith-articles!—"as for the diversity of grammars, it is well profitably taken away by the king majesties wisdom, who foreseeing the inconvenience, and favourably providing the remedie, caused one kind of grammar by sundry learned men to be diligently drawn, and so to be set out, only everywhere to be taught for the use of learners, and for the hurt in changing of schoolmaisters." What a *gusto* in that which follows: "wherein it is profitable that he [the pupil] can orderly decline his noun, and his verb." *His* noun!

The fine dream is fading away fast; and the least concern of a teacher in the present day is to inculcate grammar-rules.

The modern schoolmaster is expected to know a little of every thing, because his pupil is required not to be entirely ignorant of any thing. He must be superficially, if I may so say, omniscient. He is to

know something of pneumatics; of chemistry; of whatever is curious, or proper to excite the attention of the youthful mind; an insight into mechanics is desirable, with a touch of statistics; the quality of soils, &c., botany, the constitution of his country, *cum multis aliis.* You may get a notion of some part of his expected duties by consulting the famous Tractate on Education addressed to Mr Hartlib.

All these things—these, or the desire of them—he is expected to instil, not by set lessons from professors, which he may charge in the bill, but at school-intervals, as he walks the streets, or saunters through green fields (those natural instructors), with his pupils. The least part of what is expected from him, is to be done in school-hours. He must insinuate knowledge at the *mollia tempora fandi.* He must seize every occasion—the season of the year—the time of the day—a passing cloud—a rainbow—a waggon of hay—a regiment of soldiers going by—to inculcate something useful. He can receive no pleasure from a casual glimpse of Nature, but must catch at it as an object of instruction. He must interpret beauty into the picturesque. He cannot relish a beggar-man, or a gipsy, for thinking of the suitable improvement. Nothing comes to him, not spoiled by the sophisticating medium of moral uses. The Universe—that Great Book, as it has been called—is to him indeed, to all intents and purposes, a book, out of which he is doomed to read tedious homilies to distasting schoolboys.—Vacations themselves are none to him, he is only rather worse off than before; for commonly he has some intrusive upper-boy fastened upon him at such times; some cadet of a great family; some neglected lump of nobility; or gentry; that he must drag after him to the play, to the Panorama, to Mr Bartley's Orrery, to the Panopticon, or into the country, to a friend's house, or his favourite watering-

place. Wherever he goes, this uneasy shadow attends him. A boy is at his board, and in his path, and in all his movements. He is boy-rid, sick of perpetual boy.

Boys are capital fellows in their own way, among their mates; but they are unwholesome companions for grown people. The restraint is felt no less on the one side, than on the other.—Even a child, that "plaything for an hour," tires *always*. The noises of children, playing their own fancies—as I now hearken to them by fits, sporting on the green before my window, while I am engaged in these grave speculations at my neat suburban retreat at Shacklewell—by distance made more sweet—inexpressibly take from the labour of my task. It is like writing to music. They seem to modulate my periods. They ought at least to do so—for in the voice of that tender age there is a kind of poetry, far unlike the harsh prose-accents of man's conversation.—I should but spoil their sport, and diminish my own sympathy for them, by mingling in their pastime.

I would not be domesticated all my days with a person of very superior capacity to my own—not, if I know myself at all, from any considerations of jealousy or self-comparison, for the occasional communion with such minds has constituted the fortune and felicity of my life—but the habit of too constant intercourse with spirits above you, instead of raising you, keeps you down. Too frequent doses of original thinking from others, restrain what lesser portion of that faculty you may possess of your own. You get entangled in another man's mind, even as you lose yourself in another man's grounds. You are walking with a tall varlet, whose strides out-pace yours to lassitude. The constant operation of such potent agency would reduce me, I am convinced, to imbecility. You may derive thoughts from others;

"He must seize every occasion ..... to inculcate something useful"

your way of thinking, the mould in which your thoughts are cast, must be your own. Intellect may be imparted, but not each man's intellectual frame.—

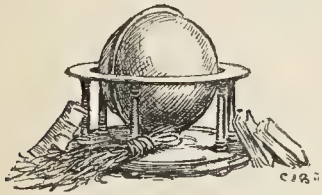
As little as I should wish to be always thus dragged upwards, as little (or rather still less) is it desirable to be stunted downwards by your associates. The trumpet does not more stun you by its loudness, than a whisper teases you by its provoking inaudibility.

Why are we never quite at our ease in the presence of a schoolmaster?—because we are conscious that he is not quite at his ease in ours. He is awkward, and out of place, in the society of his equals. He comes like Gulliver from among his little people, and he cannot fit the stature of his understanding to yours. He cannot meet you on the square. He wants a point given him, like an indifferent whist-player. He is so used to teaching, that he wants to be teaching *you*. One of these professors, upon my complaining that these little sketches of mine were any thing but methodical, and that I was unable to make them otherwise, kindly offered to instruct me in the method by which young gentlemen in *his* seminary were taught to compose English themes.—The jests of a schoolmaster are coarse, or thin. They do not *tell* out of school. He is under the restraint of a formal and didactive hypocrisy in company, as a clergyman is under a moral one. He can no more let his intellect loose in society, than the other can his inclinations.—He is forlorn among his co-evals; his juniors cannot be his friends.

"I take blame to myself," said a sensible man of this profession, writing to a friend respecting a youth who had quitted his school abruptly, "that your nephew was not more attached to me. But persons in my situation are more to be pitied, than can well be imagined. We are surrounded by young, and, consequently, ardently affectionate hearts, but *we* can

never hope to share an atom of their affections. The relation of master and scholar forbids this. *How pleasing this must be to you, how I envy your feelings*, my friends will sometimes say to me, when they see young men, whom I have educated, return after some years' absence from school, their eyes shining with pleasure, while they shake hands with their old master, bringing a present of game to me, or a toy to my wife, and thanking me in the warmest terms for my care of their education. A holiday is begged for the boys; the house is a scene of happiness; I, only, am sad at heart.—This fine-spirited and warm-hearted youth, who fancies he repays his master with gratitude for the care of his boyish years—this young man—in the eight long years I watched over him with a parent's anxiety, never could repay me with one look of genuine feeling. He was proud when I praised; he was submissive, when I reproved him; but he did never *love* me—and what he now mistakes for gratitude and kindness for me, is but the pleasant sensation, which all persons feel at revisiting the scene of their boyish hopes and fears; and the seeing on equal terms the man they were accustomed to look up to with reverence. My wife too," this interesting correspondent goes on to say, "my once darling Anna, is the wife of a schoolmaster.—When I married her —knowing that the wife of a schoolmaster ought to be a busy notable creature, and fearing that my gentle Anna would ill supply the loss of my dear bustling mother, just then dead, who never sat still, was in every part of the house in a moment, and whom I was obliged sometimes to threaten to fasten down in a chair, to save her from fatiguing herself to death—I expressed my fears, that I was bringing her into a way of life unsuitable to her; and she, who loved me tenderly, promised for my sake to exert herself to perform the duties of her new situation. She

promised, and she has kept her word. What wonders will not woman's love perform?—My house is managed with a propriety and decorum, unknown in other schools; my boys are well fed, look healthy, and have every proper accommodation; and all this performed with a careful economy, that never descends to meanness. But I have lost my gentle, *helpless* Anna!—When we sit down to enjoy an hour of repose after the fatigue of the day, I am compelled to listen to what have been her useful (and they are really useful) employments through the day, and what she proposes for her to-morrow's task. Her heart and her features are changed by the duties of her situation. To the boys she never appears other than the *master's wife*, and she looks up to me as the *boys' master;* to whom all show of love and affection would be highly improper, and unbecoming the dignity of her situation and mine. Yet *this* my gratitude forbids me to hint to her. For my sake she submitted to be this altered creature, and can I reproach her for it?"—For the communication of this letter, I am indebted to my cousin Bridget.



VALENTINE'S DAY

HAIL to thy returning festival, old Bishop Valentine! Great is thy name in the rubric, thou venerable Arch-flamen of Hymen! Immortal Go-between! who and what manner of person art thou? Art thou but a *name*, typifying the restless principle which impels poor humans to seek perfection in union? or wert thou indeed a mortal prelate, with thy tippet and thy rochet, thy apron on, and decent lawn sleeves? Mysterious personage! like unto thee, assuredly, there is no other mitred father in the calendar; not Jerome, nor Ambrose, nor Cyril; nor the consigner of undipt infants to eternal torments, Austin, whom all mothers hate; nor he who hated all mothers, Origen; nor Bishop Bull, nor Archbishop Parker, nor Whitgift. Thou comest attended with thousands and ten thousands of little Loves, and the air is

Brush'd with the hiss of rustling wings.

Singing Cupids are thy choristers and thy precentors; and instead of the crosier, the mystical arrow is borne before thee.

In other words, this is the day on which those charming little missives, ycleped Valentines, cross and intercross each other at every street and turning. The weary and all for-spent twopenny postman sinks beneath a load of delicate embarrassments, not his own. It is scarcely credible to what an extent this ephemeral courtship is carried on in this loving town, to the great enrichment of porters, and detriment of knockers and bell-wires. In these little visual interpretations, no emblem is so common as the *heart*,—that little three-cornered exponent of all our hopes and fears,—the bestuck and bleeding heart; it is twisted and tortured into more allegories and affectations than an opera hat. What authority we have in history or mythology for placing the head-quarters and metropolis of God Cupid in this anatomical seat rather than in any other, is not very clear; but we have got it, and it will serve as well as any other. Else we might easily imagine, upon some other system which might have prevailed for any thing which our pathology knows to the contrary, a lover addressing his mistress, in perfect simplicity of feeling, "Madam, my *liver* and fortune are entirely at your disposal;" or putting a delicate question, "Amanda, have you a *midriff* to bestow?" But custom has settled these things, and awarded the seat of sentiment to the aforesaid triangle, while its less fortunate neighbours wait at animal and anatomical distance.

Not many sounds in life, and I include all urban and all rural sounds, exceed in interest a *knock at the door*. It "gives a very echo to the throne where Hope is seated." But its issues seldom answer to this oracle within. It is so seldom that just the person we want to see comes. But of all the clamorous visita-

tions the welcomest in expectation is the sound that ushers in, or seems to usher in, a Valentine. As the raven himself was hoarse that announced the fatal entrance of Duncan, so the knock of the postman on this day is light, airy, confident, and befitting one that bringeth good tidings. It is less mechanical than on other days; you will say, "That is not the post, I am sure." Visions of Love, of Cupids, of Hymens! —delightful eternal common-places, which "having been will always be;" which no school-boy nor school-man can write away; having your irreversible throne in the fancy and affections—what are your transports, when the happy maiden, opening with careful finger, careful not to break the emblematic seal, bursts upon the sight of some well-designed allegory, some type, some youthful fancy, not without verses—

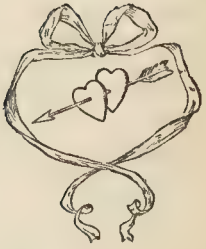
Lovers all,
A madrigal,

or some such device, not over abundant in sense—young Love disclaims it,—and not quite silly—something between wind and water, a chorus where the sheep might almost join the shepherd, as they did, or as I apprehend they did, in Arcadia.

All Valentines are not foolish; and I shall not easily forget thine, my kind friend (if I may have leave to call you so) E. B.—E. B. lived opposite a young maiden, whom he had often seen, unseen, from his parlour window in C—e-street. She was all joyousness and innocence, and just of an age to enjoy receiving a Valentine, and just of a temper to bear the disappointment of missing one with good humour. E. B. is an artist of no common powers; in the fancy parts of designing, perhaps inferior to none; his name is known at the bottom of many a well executed vignette in the way of his profession, but no further; for E. B. is modest, and the world meets nobody half-

way. E. B. meditated how he could repay this young maiden for many a favour which she had done him unknown; for when a kindly face greets us, though but passing by, and never knows us again, nor we it, we should feel it as an obligation; and E. B. did. This good artist set himself at work to please the damsel. It was just before Valentine's day three years since. He wrought, unseen and unsuspected, a wondrous work. We need not say it was on the finest gilt paper with borders—full, not of common hearts and heartless allegory, but all the prettiest stories of love from Ovid, and older poets than Ovid (for E. B. is a scholar). There was Pyramus and Thisbe, and be sure Dido was not forgot, nor Hero and Leander, and swans more than sang in Cayster, with mottos and fanciful devices, such as beseemed,—a work in short of magic. Iris dipt the woof. This on Valentine's eve he commended to the all-swallowing indiscriminate orifice — (O ignoble trust!) — of the common post; but the humble medium did its duty, and from his watchful stand, the next morning, he saw the cheerful messenger knock, and by and by the precious charge delivered. He saw, unseen, the happy girl unfold the Valentine, dance about, clap her hands, as one after one the pretty emblems unfolded themselves. She danced about, not with light love, or foolish expectations, for she had no lover; or, if she had, none she knew that could have created those bright images which delighted her. It was more like some fairy present; a God-send, as our familiarly pious ancestors termed a benefit received, where the benefactor was unknown. It would do her no harm. It would do her good for ever after. It is good to love the unknown. I only give this as a specimen of E. B. and his modest way of doing a concealed kindness.

Good-morrow to my Valentine, sings poor Ophelia; and no better wish, but with better auspices, we wish to all faithful lovers, who are not too wise to despise old legends, but are content to rank themselves humble diocesans of old Bishop Valentine, and his true church.



IMPERFECT SYMPATHIES

I am of a constitution so general, that it consorts and sympathizeth with all things, I have no antipathy, or rather idiosyncracy in any thing. Those national repugnances do not touch me, nor do I behold with prejudice the French, Italian, Spaniard, or Dutch. —*Religio Medici.*

THAT the author of the Religio Medici, mounted upon the airy stilts of abstraction, conversant about notional and conjectural essences; in whose categories of Being the possible took the upper hand of the actual; should have overlooked the impertinent individualities of such poor concretions as mankind, is not much to be admired. It is rather to be wondered at, that in the genus of animals he should have condescended to distinguish that species at all. For myself—earth-bound and fettered to the scene of my activities,—

Standing on earth, not rapt above the sky,

I confess that I do feel the differences of mankind,

national or individual, to an unhealthy excess. I can look with no indifferent eye upon things or persons. Whatever is, is to me a matter of taste or distaste; or when once it becomes indifferent, it begins to be disrelishing. I am, in plainer words, a bundle of prejudices—made up of likings and dislikings—the veriest thrall to sympathies, apathies, antipathies. In a certain sense, I hope it may be said of me that I am a lover of my species. I can feel for all indifferently, but I cannot feel towards all equally. The more purely-English word that expresses sympathy will better explain my meaning. I can be a friend to a worthy man, who upon another account cannot be my mate or *fellow*. I cannot *like* all people alike.[1]

I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen,

[1] I would be understood as confining myself to the subject of *imperfect sympathies*. To nations or classes of men there can be no direct *antipathy*. There may be individuals born and constellated so opposite to another individual nature, that the same sphere cannot hold them. I have met with my moral antipodes, and can believe the story of two persons meeting (who never saw one another before in their lives) and instantly fighting.

> ———We by proof find there should be
> 'Twixt man and man such an antipathy,
> That though he can show no just reason why
> For any former wrong or injury,
> Can neither find a blemish in his fame,
> Nor aught in face or feature justly blame,
> Can challenge or accuse him of no evil,
> Yet notwithstanding hates him as a devil.

The lines are from old Heywood's "Hierarchie of Angels," and he subjoins a curious story in confirmation, of a Spaniard who attempted to assassinate a King Ferdinand of Spain, and being put to the rack could give no other reason for the deed but an inveterate antipathy which he had taken to the first sight of the King.

> ———The cause which to that act compell'd him,
> Was, he ne'er loved him since he first beheld him.

and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They cannot like me—and in truth, I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. There is something more plain and ingenuous in their mode of proceeding. We know one another at first sight. There is an order of imperfect intellects (under which mine must be content to rank) which in its constitution is essentially anti-Caledonian. The owners of the sort of faculties I allude to, have minds rather suggestive than comprehensive. They have no pretences to much clearness or precision in their ideas, or in their manner of expressing them. Their intellectual wardrobe (to confess fairly) has few whole pieces in it. They are content with fragments and scattered pieces of Truth. She presents no full front to them—a feature or side-face at the most. Hints and glimpses, germs and crude essays at a system, is the utmost they pretend to. They beat up a little game peradventure—and leave it to knottier heads, more robust constitutions, to run it down. The light that lights them is not steady and polar, but mutable and shifting: waxing, and again waning. Their conversation is accordingly. They will throw out a random word in or out of season, and be content to let it pass for what it is worth. They cannot speak always as if they were upon their oath —but must be understood, speaking or writing, with some abatement. They seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in the green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries as they arise, without waiting for their full development. They are no systematizers, and would but err more by attempting it. Their minds, as I said before, are suggestive merely. The brain of a true Caledonian (if I am not mistaken) is constituted upon quite a different plan. His Minerva is born in panoply. You are never admitted to see his ideas in their

growth—if, indeed, they do grow, and are not rather put together upon principles of clock-work. You never catch his mind in an undress. He never hints or suggests any thing, but unlades his stock of ideas in perfect order and completeness. He brings his total wealth into company, and gravely unpacks it. His riches are always about him. He never stoops to catch a glittering something in your presence, to share it with you, before he quite knows whether it be true touch or not. You cannot cry *halves* to any thing that he finds. He does not find, but bring. You never witness his first apprehension of a thing. His understanding is always at its meridian—you never see the first dawn, the early streaks.—He has no falterings of self-suspicion. Surmises, guesses, misgivings, half-intuitions, semi-consciousnesses, partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions, have no place in his brain, or vocabulary. The twilight of dubiety never falls upon him. Is he orthodox—he has no doubts. Is he an infidel—he has none either. Between the affirmative and the negative there is no border-land with him. You cannot hover with him upon the confines of truth, or wander in the maze of a probable argument. He always keeps the path. You cannot make excursions with him—for he sets you right. His taste never fluctuates. His morality never abates. He cannot compromise, or understand middle actions. There can be but a right and a wrong. His conversation is as a book. His affirmations have the sanctity of an oath. You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. "A healthy book!"—said one of his countrymen to me, who had ventured to give that appellation to John Buncle,—"did I catch rightly what you said? I have heard of a man in health, and of a healthy state of body, but I do not

see how that epithet can be properly applied to a book." Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher upon your irony, if you are unhappily blest with a vein of it. Remember you are upon your oath. I have a print of a graceful female after Leonardo da Vinci, which I was showing off to Mr * * * *. After he had examined it minutely, I ventured to ask him how he liked MY BEAUTY (a foolish name it goes by among my friends)—when he very gravely assured me, that "he had considerable respect for my character and talents" (so he was pleased to say), "but had not given himself much thought about the degree of my personal pretensions." The misconception staggered me, but did not seem much to disconcert him.—Persons of this nation are particularly fond of affirming a truth—which nobody doubts. They do not so properly affirm, as annunciate it. They do indeed appear to have such a love of truth (as if, like virtue, it were valuable for itself) that all truth becomes equally valuable, whether the proposition that contains it be new or old, disputed, or such as is impossible to become a subject of disputation. I was present not long since at a party of North Britons, where a son of Burns was expected; and happened to drop a silly expression (in my South British way), that I wished it were the father instead of the son—when four of them started up at once to inform me, that "that was impossible, because he was dead." An impracticable wish, it seems, was more than they could conceive. Swift has hit off this part of their character, namely their love of truth, in his biting way, but with an illiberality that necessarily confines the passage to the margin.[1] The tediousness of these people is

[1] There are some people who think they sufficiently acquit themselves, and entertain their company, with relating facts of no consequence, not at all out of the road of such common

certainly provoking. I wonder if they ever tire one another!—In my early life I had a passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns. I have sometimes foolishly hoped to ingratiate myself with his countrymen by expressing it. But I have always found that a true Scot resents your admiration of his compatriot, even more than he would your contempt of him. The latter he imputes to your "imperfect acquaintance with many of the words which he uses;" and the same objection makes it a presumption in you to suppose that you can admire him.—Thomson they seem to have forgotten. Smollett they have neither forgotten nor forgiven for his delineation of Rory and his companion, upon their first introduction to our metropolis.—Speak of Smollett as a great genius, and they will retort upon you Hume's History compared with *his* Continuation of it. What if the historian had continued "Humphrey Clinker"?

I have, in the abstract, no disrespect for Jews. They are a piece of stubborn antiquity, compared with which Stonehenge is in its nonage. They date beyond the pyramids. But I should not care to be in habits of familiar intercourse with any of that nation. I confess that I have not the nerves to enter their synagogues. Old prejudices cling about me. I cannot shake off the story of Hugh of Lincoln. Centuries of injury, contempt, and hate, on the one side,—of cloaked revenge, dissimulation, and hate, on the other, between our and their fathers, must, and ought, to affect the blood of the children. I cannot believe it can run clear and

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incidents as happen every day; and this I have observed more frequently among the Scots than any other nation, who are very careful not to omit the minutest circumstances of time or place; which kind of discourse, if it were not a little relieved by the uncouth terms and phrases, as well as accent and gesture peculiar to that country, would be hardly tolerable.—*Hints towards an Essay on Conversation.*

kindly yet; or that a few fine words, such as candour, liberality, the light of a nineteenth century, can close up the breaches of so deadly a disunion. A Hebrew is nowhere congenial to me. He is least distasteful on 'Change—for the mercantile spirit levels all distinctions, as all are beauties in the dark. I boldly confess that I do not relish the approximation of Jew and Christian, which has become so fashionable. The reciprocal endearments have, to me, something hypocritical and unnatural in them. I do not like to see the Church and Synagogue kissing and congeeing in awkward postures of an affected civility. If *they* are converted, why do they not come over to us altogether? Why keep up a form of separation, when the life of it is fled? If they can sit with us at table, why do they keck at our cookery? I do not understand these half convertites. Jews christianizing—Christians judaizing—puzzle me. I like fish or flesh. A moderate Jew is a more confounding piece of anomaly than a wet Quaker. The spirit of the synagogue is essentially *separative*. B—— would have been more in keeping if he had abided by the faith of his forefathers. There is a fine scorn in his face, which nature meant to be of —— Christians. The Hebrew spirit is strong in him, in spite of his proselytism. He cannot conquer the Shibboleth. How it breaks out, when he sings, "The Children of Israel passed through the Red Sea!" The auditors, for the moment, are as Egyptians to him, and he rides over our necks in triumph. There is no mistaking him.—B—— has a strong expression of sense in his countenance, and it is confirmed by his singing. The foundation of his vocal excellence is sense. He sings with understanding, as Kemble delivered dialogue. He would sing the Commandments, and give an appropriate character to each prohibition. His nation, in general, have not over-

sensible countenances. How should they?—but you seldom see a silly expression among them. Gain, and the pursuit of gain, sharpen a man's visage. I never heard of an idiot being born among them.—Some admire the Jewish female-physiognomy. I admire it—but with trembling. Jael had those full dark inscrutable eyes.

In the Negro countenance you will often meet with strong traits of benignity. I have felt yearnings of tenderness towards some of these faces—or rather masks—that have looked out kindly upon one in casual encounters in the streets and highways. I love what Fuller beautifully calls—these "images of God cut in ebony." But I should not like to associate with them, to share my meals and my good-nights with them—because they are black.

I love Quaker ways, and Quaker worship. I venerate the Quaker principles. It does me good for the rest of the day when I meet any of their people in my path. When I am ruffled or disturbed by any occurrence, the sight, or quiet voice of a Quaker, acts upon me as a ventilator, lightening the air, and taking off a load from the bosom. But I cannot like the Quakers (as Desdemona would say) "to live with them." I am all over sophisticated—with humours, fancies, craving hourly sympathy. I must have books, pictures, theatres, chit-chat, scandal, jokes, ambiguities, and a thousand whim-whams, which their simpler taste can do without. I should starve at their primitive banquet. My appetites are too high for the salads which (according to Evelyn) Eve dressed for the angel, my gusto too excited

> To sit a guest with Daniel at his pulse.

The indirect answers which Quakers are often found to return to a question put to them may be

"Faces . . . that have looked kindly on one."

explained, I think, without the vulgar assumption, that they are more given to evasion and equivocating than other people. They naturally look to their words more carefully, and are more cautious of committing themselves. They have a peculiar character to keep up on this head. They stand in a manner upon their veracity. A Quaker is by law exempted from taking an oath. The custom of resorting to an oath in extreme cases, sanctified as it is by all religious antiquity, is apt (it must be confessed) to introduce into the laxer sort of minds the notion of two kinds of truth—the one applicable to the solemn

affairs of justice, and the other to the common proceedings of daily intercourse. As truth bound upon the conscience by an oath can be but truth, so in the common affirmations of the shop and the market-place a latitude is expected, and conceded upon questions wanting this solemn covenant. Something less than truth satisfies. It is common to hear a person say, "You do not expect me to speak as if I were upon my oath." Hence a great deal of incorrectness and inadvertency, short of falsehood, creeps into ordinary conversation; and a kind of secondary or laic-truth is tolerated, where clergy-truth —oath-truth, by the nature of the circumstances, is not required. A Quaker knows none of this distinction. His simple affirmation being received, upon the most sacred occasions, without any further test, stamps a value upon the words which he is to use upon the most indifferent topics of life. He looks to them, naturally, with more severity. You can have of him no more than his word. He knows, if he is caught tripping in a casual expression, he forfeits, for himself, at least, his claim to the invidious exemption. He knows that his syllables are weighed —and how far a consciousness of this particular watchfulness, exerted against a person, has a tendency to produce indirect answers, and a diverting of the question by honest means, might be illustrated, and the practice justified, by a more sacred example than is proper to be adduced upon this occasion. The admirable presence of mind, which is notorious in Quakers upon all contingencies, might be traced to this imposed self-watchfulness—if it did not seem rather an humble and secular scion of that old stock of religious constancy, which never bent or faltered in the Primitive Friends, or gave way to the winds of persecution, to the violence of judge or accuser, under trials and racking examinations. "You will never

"Discovered she had charged for both meals"

be the wiser, if I sit here answering your questions till midnight," said one of those upright Justices to Penn, who had been putting law-cases with a puzzling subtlety. "Thereafter as the answers may be," retorted the Quaker. The astonishing composure of this people is sometimes ludicrously displayed in lighter instances.—I was travelling in a stage-coach with three male Quakers, buttoned up in the straitest non-conformity of their sect. We stopped to bait at Andover, where a meal, partly tea apparatus, partly supper, was set before us. My friends confined themselves to the tea-table. I in my way took supper. When the landlady brought in the bill, the eldest of my companions discovered that she had charged for both meals. This was resisted. Mine hostess was very clamorous and positive. Some mild arguments were used on the part of the Quakers, for which the heated mind of the good lady seemed by no means a fit recipient. The guard came in with his usual peremptory notice. The Quakers pulled out their money, and formally tendered it—so much for tea—I, in humble imitation, tendering mine—for the supper which I had taken. She would not relax in her demand. So they all three quietly put up their silver, as did myself, and marched out of the room, the eldest and gravest going first, with myself closing up the rear, who thought I could not do better than follow the example of such grave and warrantable personages. We got in. The steps went up. The coach drove off. The murmurs of mine hostess, not very indistinctly or ambiguously pronounced, became after a time inaudible—and now my conscience, which the whimsical scene had for a time suspended, beginning to give some twitches, I waited, in the hope that some justification would be offered by these serious persons for the seeming injustice of their conduct. To my great surprise,

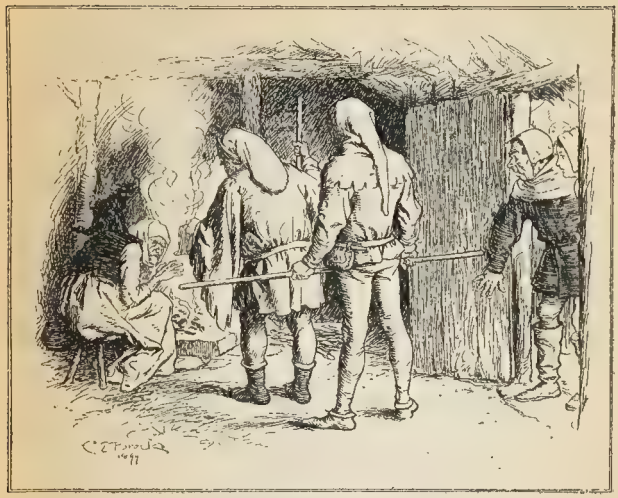
not a syllable was dropped on the subject. They sat as mute as at a meeting. At length the eldest of them broke silence, by inquiring of his next neighbour, "Hast thee heard how indigos go at the India House?" and the question operated as a soporific on my moral feeling as far as Exeter.

WITCHES AND OTHER NIGHT-FEARS

WE are too hasty when we set down our ancestors in the gross for fools, for the monstrous inconsistencies (as they seem to us) involved in their creed of witchcraft. In the relations of this visible world we find them to have been as rational, and shrewd to detect an historic anomaly, as ourselves. But when once the invisible world was supposed to be opened, and the lawless agency of bad spirits assumed, what measures of probability, of decency, of fitness, or proportion—of that which distinguishes the likely from the palpable absurd—could they have to guide them in the rejection or admission of any particular testimony ?—that maidens pined away, wasting inwardly as their waxen images consumed before a fire—that corn was lodged, and cattle lamed—that whirlwinds uptore in diabolic revelry the oaks of the forest—or that spits and kettles only danced a fearful-innocent vagary about some rustic's kitchen when no wind was stirring—were all equally probable where no law of agency

was understood. That the prince of the powers of darkness, passing by the flower and pomp of the earth, should lay preposterous siege to the weak fantasy of indigent eld—has neither likelihood nor unlikelihood *à priori* to us, who have no measure to guess at his policy, or standard to estimate what rate those anile souls may fetch in the devil's market. Nor, when the wicked are expressly symbolized by a goat, was it to be wondered at so much, that *he* should come sometimes in that body, and assert his metaphor. —That the intercourse was opened at all between both worlds was perhaps the mistake—but that once assumed, I see no reason for disbelieving one attested story of this nature more than another on the score of absurdity. There is no law to judge of the lawless, or canon by which a dream may be criticised.

I have sometimes thought that I could not have existed in the days of received witchcraft; that I could not have slept in a village where one of those reputed hags dwelt. Our ancestors were bolder or more obtuse. Amidst the universal belief that these wretches were in league with the author of all evil, holding hell tributary to their muttering, no simple Justice of the Peace seems to have scrupled issuing, or silly Headborough serving, a warrant upon them—as if they should subpœna Satan !—Prospero in his boat, with his books and wand about him, suffers himself to be conveyed away at the mercy of his enemies to an unknown island. He might have raised a storm or two, we think, on the passage. His acquiescence is in exact analogy to the non-resistance of witches to the constituted powers.—What stops the Fiend in Spenser from tearing Guyon to pieces—or who had made it a condition of his prey, that Guyon must take assay of the glorious bait—we have no guess. We do not know the laws of that country.



Serving a warrant.

From my childhood I was extremely inquisitive about witches and witch-stories. My maid, and more legendary aunt, supplied me with good store. But I shall mention the accident which directed my curiosity originally into this channel. In my father's book-closet, the History of the Bible, by Stackhouse, occupied a distinguished station. The pictures with which it abounds—one of the ark, in particular, and another of Solomon's temple, delineated with all the fidelity of ocular admeasurement, as if the artist had been upon the spot—attracted my childish attention. There was a picture, too, of the Witch raising up Samuel, which I wish that I had never seen. We shall come to that hereafter. Stackhouse is in two huge tomes—and there was a pleasure in removing folios of that magnitude, which, with infinite

straining, was as much as I could manage, from the situation which they occupied upon an upper shelf. I have not met with the work from that time to this, but I remember it consisted of Old Testament stories, orderly set down, with the *objection* appended to each story, and the *solution* of the objection regularly tacked to that. The *objection* was a summary of whatever difficulties had been opposed to the credibility of the history, by the shrewdness of ancient or modern infidelity, drawn up with an almost complimentary excess of candour. The *solution* was brief, modest, and satisfactory. The bane and antidote were both before you. To doubts so put, and so quashed, there seemed to be an end for ever. The dragon lay dead, for the foot of the veriest babe to trample on. But—like as was rather feared than realised from that slain monster in Spenser—from the womb of those crushed errors young dragonets would creep, exceeding the prowess of so tender a Saint George as myself to vanquish. The habit of expecting objections to every passage, set me upon starting more objections, for the glory of finding a solution of my own for them. I became staggered and perplexed, a sceptic in long coats. The pretty Bible stories which I had read, or heard read in church, lost their purity and sincerity of impression, and were turned into so many historic or chronologic theses to be defended against whatever impugners. I was not to disbelieve them, but—the next thing to that—I was to be quite sure that some one or other would or had disbelieved them. Next to making a child an infidel, is the letting him know that there are infidels at all. Credulity is the man's weakness, but the child's strength. O, how ugly sound scriptural doubts from the mouth of a babe and a suckling!—I should have lost myself in these mazes, and have pined away, I think, with such unfit sustenance as these husks afforded, but for a fortunate

piece of ill-fortune, which about this time befel me. Turning over the picture of the ark with too much haste, I unhappily made a breach in its ingenious fabric—driving my inconsiderate fingers right through the two larger quadrupeds—the elephant, and the camel—that stare (as well they might) out of the two last windows next the steerage in that unique piece of naval architecture. Stackhouse was henceforth locked up, and became an interdicted treasure. With the book, the *objections* and *solutions* gradually cleared out of my head, and have seldom returned since in any force to trouble me.—But there was one impression which I had imbibed from Stackhouse, which no lock or bar could shut out, and which was destined to try my childish nerves rather more seriously.—That detestable picture!

I was dreadfully alive to nervous terrors. The night-time solitude, and the dark, were my hell. The sufferings I endured in this nature would justify the expression. I never laid my head on my pillow, I suppose, from the fourth to the seventh or eighth year of my life—so far as memory serves in things so long ago—without an assurance, which realized its own prophecy, of seeing some frightful spectre. Be old Stackhouse then acquitted in part, if I say, that to his picture of the Witch raising up Samuel—(O that old man covered with a mantle!) I owe—not my midnight terrors, the hell of my infancy—but the shape and manner of their visitation. It was he who dressed up for me a hag that nightly sate upon my pillow—a sure bed-fellow, when my aunt or my maid was far from me. All day long, while the book was permitted me, I dreamed waking over his delineation, and at night (if I may use so bold an expression) awoke into sleep, and found the vision true. I durst not, even in the day-light, once enter the chamber where I slept, without my face turned to the window,

aversely from the bed where my witch-ridden pillow was.—Parents do not know what they do when they leave tender babes alone to go to sleep in the dark. The feeling about for a friendly arm—the hoping for a familiar voice—when they wake screaming—and find none to soothe them—what a terrible shaking it is to their poor nerves! The keeping them up till midnight, through candle-light and the unwholesome hours, as they are called,—would, I am satisfied, in a medical point of view, prove the better caution.—That detestable picture, as I have said, gave the fashion to my dreams—if dreams they were—for the scene of them was invariably the room in which I lay. Had I never met with the picture, the fears would have come self-pictured in some shape or other—

Headless bear, black man, or ape—

but, as it was, my imaginations took that form.—It is not book, or picture, or the stories of foolish servants, which create these terrors in children. They can at most but give them a direction. Dear little T. H., who of all children has been brought up with the most scrupulous exclusion of every taint of superstition—who was never allowed to hear of goblin or apparition, or scarcely to be told of bad men, or to read or hear of any distressing story—finds all this world of fear, from which he has been so rigidly excluded *ab extra*, in his own "thick-coming fancies;" and from his little midnight pillow, this nurse-child of optimism will start at shapes, unborrowed of tradition, in sweats to which the reveries of the cell-damned murderer are tranquillity.

Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras—dire stories of Celæno and the Harpies—may reproduce themselves in the brain of superstition—but they were there before. They are transcripts, types—the archetypes are in us, and eternal. How else should the

recital of that, which we know in a waking sense to be false, come to affect us at all?—or

> ——Names, whose sense we see not,
> Fray us with things that be not?

Is it that we naturally conceive terror from such objects, considered in their capacity of being able to inflict upon us bodily injury?—O, least of all! These terrors are of older standing. They date beyond body—or, without the body, they would have been the same. All the cruel, tormenting, defined devils in Dante—tearing, mangling, choking, stifling, scorching demons—are they one half so fearful to the spirit of a man, as the simple idea of a spirit unembodied following him—

> Like one that on a lonesome road
> Doth walk in fear and dread,
> And having once turn'd round, walks on,
> And turns no more his head;
> Because he knows a frightful fiend
> Doth close behind him tread.[1]

That the kind of fear here treated of is purely spiritual—that it is strong in proportion as it is objectless upon earth—that it predominates in the period of sinless infancy—are difficulties, the solution of which might afford some probable insight into our antemundane condition, and a peep at least into the shadow-land of pre-existence.

My night-fancies have long ceased to be afflictive. I confess an occasional night-mare; but I do not, as in early youth, keep a stud of them. Fiendish faces, with the extinguished taper, will come and look at me, but I know them for mockeries, even while I cannot elude their presence, and I fight and grapple with them. For the credit of my imagination, I am almost ashamed to say how tame and prosaic my

[1] Mr Coleridge's Ancient Mariner

dreams are grown. They are never romantic, seldom even rural. They are of architecture and of buildings—cities abroad, which I have never seen, and hardly have hope to see. I have traversed, for the seeming length of a natural day, Rome, Amsterdam, Paris, Lisbon—their churches, palaces, squares, market-places, shops, suburbs, ruins, with an inexpressible sense of delight—a map-like distinctness of trace—and a daylight vividness of vision, that was all but being awake.—I have formerly travelled among the Westmoreland fells—my highest Alps,—but they are objects too mighty for the grasp of my dreaming recognition; and I have again and again awoke with ineffectual struggles of the inner eye, to make out a shape in any way whatever, of Helvellyn. Methought I was in that country, but the mountains were gone. The poverty of my dreams mortifies me. There is Coleridge, at his will can conjure up icy domes, and pleasure houses for Kubla Khan, and Abyssinian maids, and songs of Abara, and caverns,

Where Alph, the sacred river, runs,

to solace his night solitudes—when I cannot muster a fiddle. Barry Cornwall has his tritons and his nereids gamboling before him in nocturnal visions, and proclaiming sons born to Neptune—when my stretch of imaginative activity can hardly, in the night season, raise up the ghost of a fish-wife. To set my failures in somewhat a mortifying light—it was after reading the noble Dream of this poet, that my fancy ran strong upon these marine spectra; and the poor plastic power, such as it is, within me set to work, to humour my folly in a sort of dream that very night. Methought I was upon the ocean billows at some sea nuptials, riding and mounted high, with the customary train sounding their conchs before me, (I myself, you may be sure, the *leading god*,) and

"Methought I was upon the ocean billows."

jollily we went careering over the main, till just where Ino Leucothea should have greeted me (I think it was Ino) with a white embrace, the billows gradually subsiding, fell from a sea-roughness to a sea-calm, and thence to a river-motion, and that river (as happens in the familiarization of dreams) was no other than the gentle Thames, which landed me, in the wafture of a placid wave or two, alone, safe and inglorious, somewhere at the foot of Lambeth palace.

The degree of the soul's creativeness in sleep might furnish no whimsical criterion of the quantum of poetical faculty resident in the same soul waking. An old gentleman, a friend of mine, and a humourist, used to carry this notion so far, that when he saw

any stripling of his acquaintance ambitious of becoming a poet, his first question would be,—"Young man, what sort of dreams have you?" I have so much faith in my old friend's theory, that when I feel that idle vein returning upon me, I presently subside into my proper element of prose, remembering those eluding nereids, and that inauspicious inland landing.

MY RELATIONS

I AM arrived at that point of life, at which a man may account it a blessing, as it is a singularity, if he have either of his parents surviving. I have not that felicity—and sometimes think feelingly of a passage in Browne's Christian Morals, where he speaks of a man that hath lived sixty or seventy years in the world. "In such a compass of time," he says, "a man may have a close apprehension what it is to be forgotten, when he hath lived to find none who could remember his father, or scarcely the friends of his youth, and may sensibly see with what a face in no long time Oblivion will look upon himself."

I had an aunt, a dear and good one. She was one whom single blessedness had soured to the world. She often used to say, that I was the only thing in it which she loved; and, when she thought I was quitting it, she grieved over me with mother's tears. A partiality quite so exclusive my reason cannot altogether approve. She was from morning till night poring over good books, and devotional exercises. Her favourite volumes were Thomas à Kempis, in

Stanhope's Translation; and a Roman Catholic Prayer Book, with the *matins* and *complines* regularly set down,—terms which I was at that time too young to understand. She persisted in reading them, although admonished daily concerning their Papistical tendency; and went to church every Sabbath, as a good Protestant should do. These were the only books she studied; though, I think, at one period of her life, she told me, she had read with great satisfaction the Adventures of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman. Finding the door of the chapel in Essex-street open one day—it was in the infancy of that heresy—she went in, liked the sermon, and the manner of worship, and frequented it at intervals for some time after. She came not for doctrinal points, and never missed them. With some little asperities in her constitution, which I have above hinted at, she was a steadfast, friendly being, and a fine *old Christian*. She was a woman of strong sense, and a shrewd mind —extraordinary at a *repartee*; one of the few occasions of her breaking silence—else she did not much value wit. The only secular employment I remember to have seen her engaged in, was, the splitting of French beans, and dropping them into a China basin of fair water. The odour of those tender vegetables to this day comes back upon my sense, redolent of soothing recollections. Certainly it is the most delicate of culinary operations.

Male aunts, as somebody calls them, I had none—to remember. By the uncle's side I may be said to have been born an orphan. Brother, or sister, I never had any—to know them. A sister, I think, that should have been Elizabeth, died in both our infancies. What a comfort, or what a care, may I not have missed in her!—But I have cousins, sprinkled about in Hertfordshire—besides *two*, with whom I have been all my life in habits of the closest intimacy,

and whom I may term cousins *par excellence*. These are James and Bridget Elia. They are older than myself by twelve, and ten, years; and neither of them seems disposed, in matters of advice and guidance, to waive any of the prerogatives which primogeniture confers. May they continue still in the same mind; and when they shall be seventy-five, and seventy-three, years old (I cannot spare them sooner), persist in treating me in my grand climacteric precisely as a stripling, or younger brother!

James is an inexplicable cousin. Nature hath her unities, which not every critic can penetrate; or, if we feel, we cannot explain them. The pen of Yorick, and of none since his, could have drawn J. E. entire—those fine Shandian lights and shades, which make up his story. I must limp after in my poor antithetical manner, as the fates have given me grace and talent. J. E. then—to the eye of a common observer at least—seemeth made up of contradictory principles.—The genuine child of impulse, the frigid philosopher of prudence—the phlegm of my cousin's doctrine is invariably at war with his temperament, which is high sanguine. With always some fire-new project in his brain, J. E. is the systematic opponent of innovation, and crier down of every thing that has not stood the test of age and experiment. With a hundred fine notions chasing one another hourly in his fancy, he is startled at the least approach to the romantic in others; and, determined by his own sense in every thing, commends *you* to the guidance of common sense on all occasions. —With a touch of the eccentric in all which he does, or says, he is only anxious that *you* should not commit yourself by doing any thing absurd or singular. On my once letting slip at table, that I was not fond of a certain popular dish, he begged me at any rate not to *say* so—for the world would think

me mad. He disguises a passionate fondness for works of high art (whereof he hath amassed a choice collection), under the pretext of buying only to sell again—that his enthusiasm may give no encouragement to yours. Yet, if it were so, why does that piece of tender, pastoral Dominichino hang still by his wall ?—is the ball of his sight much more dear to him ?—or what picture-dealer can talk like him ?

Whereas mankind in general are observed to warp their speculative conclusions to the bent of their individual humours, *his* theories are sure to be in diametrical opposition to his constitution. He is courageous as Charles of Sweden, upon instinct; chary of his person, upon principle, as a travelling Quaker.—He has been preaching up to me, all my life, the doctrine of bowing to the great—the necessity of forms, and manners, to a man's getting on in the world. He himself never aims at either, that I can discover,—and has a spirit, that would stand upright in the presence of the Cham of Tartary. It is pleasant to hear him discourse of patience—extolling it as the truest wisdom—and to see him during the last seven minutes that his dinner is getting ready. Nature never ran up in her haste a more restless piece of workmanship than when she moulded this impetuous cousin—and Art never turned out a more elaborate orator than he can display himself to be, upon his favourite topic of the advantages of quiet, and contentedness in the state, whatever it be, that we are placed in. He is triumphant on this theme, when he has you safe in one of those short stages that ply for the western road, in a very obstructing manner, at the foot of John Murray's street —where you get in when it is empty, and are expected to wait till the vehicle hath completed her just freight—a trying three quarters of an hour to some people. He wonders at your fidgetiness,—

" where could we be better than we are, *thus sitting, thus consulting?* "—" prefers, for his part, a state of rest to locomotion,"—with an eye all the while upon the coachman—till at length, waxing out of all patience, at *your want of it*, he breaks out into a pathetic remonstrance at the fellow for detaining us so long over the time which he had professed, and declares peremptorily, that " the gentleman in the coach is determined to get out, if he does not drive on that instant."

Very quick at inventing an argument, or detecting a sophistry, he is incapable of attending *you* in any chain of arguing. Indeed he makes wild work with logic ; and seems to jump at most admirable conclusions by some process, not at all akin to it. Consonantly enough to this, he hath been heard to deny, upon certain occasions, that there exists such a faculty at all in man as *reason ;* and wondereth how man came first to have a conceit of it—enforcing his negation with all the might of *reasoning* he is master of. He has some speculative notions against laughter, and will maintain that laughing is not natural to *him* —when peradventure the next moment his lungs shall crow like Chanticleer. He says some of the best things in the world—and declareth that wit is his aversion. It was he who said, upon seeing the Eton boys at play in their grounds—*What a pity to think that these fine ingenuous lads in a few years will all be changed into frivolous Members of Parliament !*

His youth was fiery, glowing, tempestuous—and in age he discovereth no symptom of cooling. This is that which I admire in him. I hate people who meet Time half-way. I am for no compromise with that inevitable spoiler. While he lives, J. E. will take his swing.—It does me good, as I walk towards the street of my daily avocation, on some fine May morning, to meet him marching in a quite

opposite direction, with a jolly handsome presence, and shining sanguine face, that indicates some purchase in his eye—a Claude—or a Hobbima—for much of his enviable leisure is consumed at Christie's, and Phillips's—or where not, to pick up pictures, and such gauds. On these occasions he mostly stoppeth me, to read a short lecture on the advantage a person like me possesses above himself, in having his time occupied with business which he *must do*—assureth me that he often feels it hang heavy on his hands—wishes he had fewer holidays—and goes off—Westward Ho !—chanting a tune, to Pall Mall—perfectly convinced that he has convinced me—while I proceed in my opposite direction tuneless.

It is pleasant again to see this Professor of Indifference doing the honours of his new purchase, when he has fairly housed it. You must view it in every light till *he* has found the best—placing it at this distance, and at that, but always suiting the focus of your sight to his own. You must spy at it through your fingers, to catch the aërial perspective—though you assure him that to you the landscape shows much more agreeable without that artifice. Wo be to the luckless wight, who does not only not respond to his rapture, but who should drop an unseasonable intimation of preferring one of his anterior bargains to the present !—The last is always his best hit—his "Cynthia of the minute." Alas ! how many a mild Madonna have I known to *come in*—a Raphael ! —keep its ascendancy for a few brief moons—then, after certain intermedial degradations from the front drawing-room to the back gallery, thence to the dark parlour,—adopted in turn by each of the Carracci, under successive lowering ascriptions of filiation, mildly breaking its fall—consigned to the oblivious lumber-room, *go out* at last a Luca Giordano, or plain Carlo Maratti !—which things when I beheld

"You must spy at it through your finger."

—musing upon the chances and mutabilities of fate below, hath made me to reflect upon the altered condition of great personages, or that woful Queen of Richard the Second—

> ——set forth in pomp,
> She came adorned hither like sweet May.
> Sent back like Hallowmass or shortest day.

With great love for *you*, J. E. hath but a limited sympathy with what you feel or do. He lives in a world of his own, and makes slender guesses at what passes in your mind. He never pierces the marrow of your habits. He will tell an old established play-goer, that Mr. Such-a-one, of So-and-so (naming one of the theatres), is a very lively comedian—as a piece

of news! He advertised me but the other day of some pleasant green lanes which he had found out for me, *knowing me to be a great walker*, in my own immediate vicinity—who have haunted the identical spot any time these twenty years!—He has not much respect for that class of feelings which goes by the name of sentimental. He applies the definition of real evil to bodily sufferings exclusively—and rejecteth all others as imaginary. He is affected by the sight, or the bare supposition, of a creature in pain, to a degree which I have never witnessed out of womankind. A constitutional acuteness to this class of sufferings may in part account for this. The animal tribe in particular he taketh under his especial protection. A broken-winded or spur-galled horse is sure to find an advocate in him. An over-loaded ass is his client for ever. He is the apostle to the brute kind—the never-failing friend of those who have none to care for them. The contemplation of a lobster boiled, or eels skinned *alive*, will wring him so, that "all for pity he could die." It will take the savour from his palate, and the rest from his pillow, for days and nights. With the intense feeling of Thomas Clarkson, he wanted only the steadiness of pursuit, and unity of purpose, of that "true yoke-fellow with Time," to have effected as much for the *Animal*, as *he* hath done for the *Negro Creation*. But my uncontrollable cousin is but imperfectly formed for purposes which demand co-operation. He cannot wait. His amelioration-plans must be ripened in a day. For this reason he has cut but an equivocal figure in benevolent societies, and combinations for the alleviation of human sufferings. His zeal constantly makes him to outrun, and put out, his coadjutors. He thinks of relieving,—while they think of debating. He was blackballed out of a society for the Relief of * * * * * * * * * *, because the fervour

of his humanity toiled beyond the formal apprehension, and creeping processes, of his associates. I shall always consider this distinction as a patent of nobility in the Elia family!

Do I mention these seeming inconsistencies to smile at, or upbraid, my unique cousin? Marry, heaven, and all good manners, and the understanding that should be between kinsfolk, forbid!—With all the strangenesses of this *strangest of the Elias*—I would not have him in one jot or tittle other than he is; neither would I barter or exchange my wild kinsman for the most exact, regular, and every-way consistent kinsman breathing.

In my next, reader, I may perhaps give you some account of my cousin Bridget—if you are not already surfeited with cousins—and take you by the hand, if you are willing to go with us, on an excursion which we made a summer or two since, in search of *more cousins*—

Through the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.

MACKERY END, IN HERTFORDSHIRE

BRIDGET ELIA has been my housekeeper for many a long year. I have obligations to Bridget, extending beyond the period of memory. We house together, old bachelor and maid, in a sort of double singleness; with such tolerable comfort, upon the whole, that I, for one, find in myself no sort of disposition to go out upon the mountains, with the rash king's offspring, to bewail my celibacy. We agree pretty well in our tastes and habits—yet so, as "with a difference." We are generally in harmony, with occasional bickerings—as it should be among near relations. Our sympathies are rather understood, than expressed; and once, upon my dissembling a tone in my voice more kind than ordinary, my cousin burst into tears, and complained that I was altered. We are both great readers in different directions. While I am hanging over (for the thousandth time) some passage in old Burton, or one of his strange contemporaries, she is abstracted in some modern tale, or adventure, whereof our common reading-table is daily fed with assiduously fresh supplies. Narrative teases me. I have little concern in the progress of events. She must have a story—well,

ill, or indifferently told—so there be life stirring in it, and plenty of good or evil accidents. The fluctuations of fortune in fiction—and almost in real life—have ceased to interest, or operate but dully upon me. Out-of-the-way humours and opinions—heads with some diverting twist in them—the oddities of authorship please me most. My cousin has a native disrelish of any thing that sounds odd or bizarre. Nothing goes down with her, that is quaint, irregular, or out of the road of common sympathy. She "holds Nature more clever." I can pardon her blindness to the beautiful obliquities of the Religio Medici; but she must apologise to me for certain disrespectful insinuations, which she has been pleased to throw out latterly, touching the intellectuals of a dear favourite of mine, of the last century but one—the thrice noble, chaste, and virtuous,—but again somewhat fantastical, and original-brain'd, generous Margaret Newcastle.

It has been the lot of my cousin, oftener perhaps than I could have wished, to have had for her associates and mine, free-thinkers—leaders, and disciples, of novel philosophies and systems; but she neither wrangles with, nor accepts, their opinions. That which was good and venerable to her, when a child, retains its authority over her mind still. She never juggles or plays tricks with her understanding.

We are both of us inclined to be a little too positive; and I have observed the result of our disputes to be almost uniformly this—that in matters of fact, dates, and circumstances, it turns out, that I was in the right, and my cousin in the wrong. But where we have differed upon moral points; upon something proper to be done, or let alone; whatever heat of opposition, or steadiness of conviction, I set out with, I am sure always, in the long run, to be brought over to her way of thinking.

I must touch upon the foibles of my kinswoman

with a gentle hand, for Bridget does not like to be told of her faults. She hath an awkward trick (to say no worse of it) of reading in company: at which times she will answer *yes* or *no* to a question without fully understanding its purport—which is provoking, and derogatory in the highest degree to the dignity of the putter of the said question. Her presence of mind is equal to the most pressing trials of life, but will sometimes desert her upon trifling occasions. When the purpose requires it, and is a thing of moment, she can speak to it greatly; but in matters which are not stuff of the conscience, she hath been known sometimes to let slip a word less seasonably.

Her education in youth was not much attended to; and she happily missed all that train of female garniture, which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up exactly in this fashion. I know not whether their chance in wedlock might not be diminished by it; but I can answer for it, that it makes (if the worst come to the worst) most incomparable old maids.

In a season of distress, she is the truest comforter; but in the teazing accidents, and minor perplexities, which do not call out the *will* to meet them, she sometimes maketh matters worse by an excess of participation. If she does not always divide your trouble, upon the pleasanter occasions of life she is sure always to treble your satisfaction. She is excellent to be at a play with, or upon a visit; but best, when she goes a journey with you.

We made an excursion together a few summers since, into Hertfordshire, to beat up the quarters of

some of our less-known relations in that fine corn country.

The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End; or Mackarel End, as it is spelt, perhaps more properly, in some old maps of Hertfordshire; a farmhouse,—delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead. I can just remember having been there, on a visit to a great-aunt, when I was a child, under the care of Bridget; who, as I have said, is older than myself by some ten years. I wish that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences, that we might share them in equal division. But that is impossible. The house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman, who had married my grandmother's sister. His name was Gladman. My grandmother was a Bruton, married to a Field. The Gladmans and the Brutons are still flourishing in that part of the county, but the Fields are almost extinct. More than forty years had elapsed since the visit I speak of; and for the greater portion of that period, we had lost sight of the other two branches also. Who or what sort of persons inherited Mackery End — kindred or strange folk — we were afraid almost to conjecture, but determined some day to explore.

By somewhat a circuitous route, taking the noble park at Luton in our way from St. Alban's, we arrived at the spot of our anxious curiosity about noon. The sight of the old farm-house, though every trace of it was effaced from my recollection, affected me with a pleasure which I had not experienced for many a year. For though *I* had forgotten it, *we* had never forgotten being there together, and we had been talking about Mackery End all our lives, till memory on my part became mocked with a phantom of itself, and I thought I knew the aspect of a place, which, when present, O how unlike it was to *that*,

which I had conjured up so many times instead of it!

Still the air breathed balmily about it; the season was in the "heart of June," and I could say with the poet,

> But thou, that didst appear so fair
> To fond imagination,
> Dost rival in the light of day
> Her delicate creation!

Bridget's was more a waking bliss than mine, for she easily remembered her old acquaintance again—some altered features of course, a little grudged at. At first, indeed, she was ready to disbelieve for joy; but the scene soon re-confirmed itself in her affections—and she traversed every out-post of the old mansion, to the wood-house, the orchard, the place where the pigeon-house had stood (house and birds were alike flown) with a breathless impatience of recognition, which was more pardonable perhaps than decorous at the age of fifty odd. But Bridget in some things is behind her years.

The only thing left was to get into the house—and that was a difficulty which to me singly would have been insurmountable; for I am terribly shy in making myself known to strangers and out-of-date kinsfolk. Love, stronger than scruple, winged my cousin in without me; but she soon returned with a creature that might have sat to a sculptor for the image of Welcome. It was the youngest of the Gladmans; who, by marriage with a Bruton, had become mistress of the old mansion. A comely brood are the Brutons. Six of them, females, were noted as the handsomest young women in the county. But this adopted Bruton, in my mind, was better than they all—more comely. She was born too late to have remembered me. She just recollected in early life to have had her cousin Bridget once pointed out to her, climbing a

"The image of Welcome"

style. But the name of kindred, and of cousinship, was enough. Those slender ties, that prove slight as gossamer in the rending atmosphere of a metropolis, bind faster, as we found it, in hearty, homely, loving Hertfordshire. In five minutes we were as thoroughly acquainted as if we had been born and bred up together; were familiar, even to the calling each other by our Christian names. So Christians should call one another. To have seen Bridget, and her—it was like the meeting of the two scriptural cousins! There was a grace and dignity, an amplitude of form and stature, answering to her mind, in this farmer's wife, which would have shined in a palace—or so we thought it. We were made welcome by husband and wife equally—we, and our friend that was with us. I had almost forgotten him—but B. F. will not so soon forget that meeting, if peradventure he shall read this on the far distant shores where the Kangaroo haunts. The fatted calf was made ready, or rather was already so, as if in anticipation of our coming; and, after an appropriate glass of native wine, never let me forget with what honest pride this hospitable cousin made us proceed to Wheathampstead, to introduce us (as some new-found rarity) to her mother and sister Gladmans, who did indeed know something more of us, at a time when she almost knew nothing. —With what corresponding kindness we were received by them also—how Bridget's memory, exalted by the occasion, warmed into a thousand half-obliterated recollections of things and persons, to my utter astonishment, and her own—and to the astoundment of B. F. who sat by, almost the only thing that was not a cousin there,—old effaced images of more than half-forgotten names and circumstances still crowding back upon her, as words written in lemon come out upon exposure to a friendly warmth,—when I forget all this, then may my country cousins forget me; and

Bridget no more remember, that in the days of weakling infancy I was her tender charge—as I have been her care in foolish manhood since—in those pretty pastoral walks, long ago, about Mackery End, in Hertfordshire.

MODERN GALLANTRY

IN comparing modern with ancient manners, we are pleased to compliment ourselves upon the point of gallantry; a certain obsequiousness, or deferential respect, which we are supposed to pay to females, as females.

I shall believe that this principle actuates our conduct, when I can forget, that in the nineteenth century of the era from which we date our civility, we are but just beginning to leave off the very frequent practice of whipping females in public, in common with the coarsest male offenders.

I shall believe it to be influential, when I can shut my eyes to the fact, that in England women are still occasionally—hanged.

I shall believe in it, when actresses are no longer subject to be hissed off a stage by gentlemen.

I shall believe in it, when Dorimant hands a fish-wife across the kennel ; or assists the apple-woman to pick up her wandering fruit, which some unlucky dray has just dissipated.

I shall believe in it, when the Dorimants in humbler life, who would be thought in their way notable adepts in this refinement, shall act upon it in places where they are not known, or think themselves not observed —when I shall see the traveller for some rich tradesman part with his admired box-coat, to spread it over the defenceless shoulders of the poor woman, who is passing to her parish on the roof of the same stage-coach with him, drenched in the rain—when I shall no longer see a woman standing up in the pit of a London theatre, till she is sick and faint with the exertion, with men about her, seated at their ease, and jeering at her distress ; till one, that seems to have more manners or conscience than the rest, significantly declares "she should be welcome to his seat, if she were a little younger and handsomer." Place this dapper warehouseman, or that rider, in a circle of their own female acquaintance, and you shall confess you have not seen a politer-bred man in Lothbury.

Lastly, I shall begin to believe that there is some such principle influencing our conduct, when more than one-half of the drudgery and coarse servitude of the world shall cease to be performed by women.

Until that day comes, I shall never believe this boasted point to be anything more than a conventional fiction ; a pageant got up between the sexes, in a certain rank, and at a certain time of life, in which both find their account equally.

I shall be even disposed to rank it among the salutary fictions of life, when in polite circles I shall

"Drenched in the rain."

see the same attentions paid to age as to youth, to homely features as to handsome, to coarse complexions as to clear—to the woman, as she is a woman, not as she is a beauty, a fortune, or a title.

I shall believe it to be something more than a name, when a well-dressed gentleman in a well-dressed company can advert to the topic of *female old age* without exciting, and intending to excite, a sneer :—

when the phrases "antiquated virginity," and such a one has "overstood her market," pronounced in good company, shall raise immediate offence in man, or woman, that shall hear them spoken.

Joseph Paice, of Bread-street-hill, merchant, and one of the Directors of the South-Sea company—the same to whom Edwards, the Shakespeare commentator, has addressed a fine sonnet—was the only pattern of consistent gallantry I have met with. He took me under his shelter at an early age, and bestowed some pains upon me. I owe to his precepts and example whatever there is of the man of business (and that is not much) in my composition. It was not his fault that I did not profit more. Though bred a Presbyterian, and brought up a merchant, he was the finest gentleman of his time. He had not *one* system of attention to females in the drawing-room, and *another* in the shop, or at the stall. I do not mean that he made no distinction. But he never lost sight of sex, or overlooked it in the casualties of a disadvantageous situation. I have seen him stand bare-headed—smile if you please—to a poor servant girl, while she has been inquiring of him the way to some street—in such a posture of unforced civility, as neither to embarrass her in the acceptance, nor himself in the offer, of it. He was no dangler, in the common acceptation of the word, after women: but he reverenced and upheld, in every form in which it came before him, *womanhood*. I have seen him—nay, smile not—tenderly escorting a market-woman, whom he had encountered in a shower, exalting his umbrella over her poor basket of fruit, that it might receive no damage, with as much carefulness as if she had been a Countess. To the reverend form of Female Eld he would yield the wall (though it were to an ancient beggar-woman) with more ceremony than we can afford to show our grandams. He was the Preux

"Tenderly escorting a market-woman"

Chevalier of Age; the Sir Calidore, or Sir Tristan, to those who have no Calidores or Tristans to defend them. The roses, that had long faded thence, still bloomed for him in those withered and yellow cheeks.

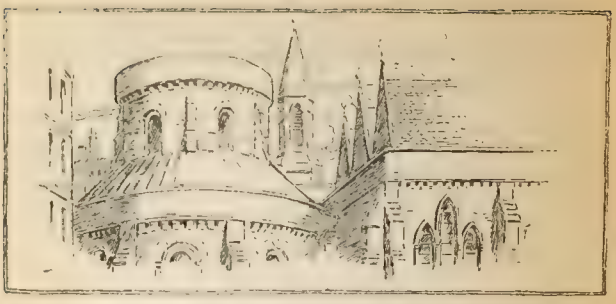
He was never married, but in his youth he paid his addresses to the beautiful Susan Winstanley—old Winstanley's daughter of Clapton—who dying in the early days of their courtship, confirmed in him the resolution of perpetual bachelorship. It was during their short courtship, he told me, that he had been one day treating his mistress with a profusion of civil speeches—the common gallantries—to which kind of thing she had hitherto manifested no repugnance—but in this instance with no effect. He could not obtain from her a decent acknowledgment in return. She rather seemed to resent his compliments. He could not set it down to caprice, for the lady had always shown herself above that littleness. When he ventured on the following day, finding her a little better humoured, to expostulate with her on her coldness of yesterday, she confessed, with her usual frankness, that she had no sort of dislike to his attentions; that she could even endure some high-flown compliments; that a young woman placed in her situation had a right to expect all sort of civil things said to her; that she hoped she could digest a dose of adulation, short of insincerity, with as little injury to her humility as most young women: but that—a little before he had commenced his compliments—she had overheard him by accident, in rather rough language, rating a young woman, who had not brought home his cravats quite to the appointed time, and she thought to herself, "As I am Miss Susan Winstanley, and a young lady—a reputed beauty, and known to be a fortune,—I can have my choice of the finest speeches from the mouth of this very fine gentleman who is courting me—but if I had been poor Mary

Such-a-one (*naming the milliner*),—and had failed of bringing home the cravats to the appointed hour—though perhaps I had sat up half the night to forward them—what sort of compliments should I have received then?—And my woman's pride came to my assistance; and I thought, that if it were only to do *me* honour, a female, like myself, might have received handsomer usage; and I was determined not to accept any fine speeches, to the compromise of that sex, the belonging to which was after all my strongest claim and title to them."

I think the lady discovered both generosity, and a just way of thinking, in this rebuke which she gave her lover; and I have sometimes imagined, that the uncommon strain of courtesy, which through life regulated the actions and behaviour of my friend towards all of womankind indiscriminately, owed its happy origin to this seasonable lesson from the lips of his lamented mistress.

I wish the whole female world would entertain the same notion of these things that Miss Winstanley showed. Then we should see something of the spirit of consistent gallantry; and no longer witness the anomaly of the same man—a pattern of true politeness to a wife—of cold contempt, or rudeness, to a sister—the idolater of his female mistress—the disparager and despiser of his no less female aunt, or unfortunate—still female—maiden cousin. Just so much respect as a woman derogates from her own sex, in whatever condition placed—her handmaid, or dependent—she deserves to have diminished from herself on that score; and probably will feel the diminution, when youth, and beauty, and advantages, not inseparable from sex, shall lose of their attraction. What a woman should demand of a man in courtship, or after it, is first—respect for her as she is a woman; —and next to that—to be respected by him above all

other women. But let her stand upon her female character as upon a foundation; and let the attentions, incident to individual preference, be so many pretty additaments and ornaments—as many, and as fanciful, as you please—to that main structure. Let her first lesson be—with sweet Susan Winstanley—to *reverence her sex.*



THE OLD BENCHERS OF THE INNER TEMPLE

I WAS born, and passed the first seven years of my life, in the Temple. Its church, its halls, its gardens, its fountain, its river, I had almost said—for in those young years, what was this king of rivers to me but a stream that watered our pleasant places?—these are my oldest recollections. I repeat, to this day, no verses to myself more frequently, or with kindlier emotion, than those of Spenser, where he speaks of this spot.

> There when they came, whereas those bricky towers,
> The which on Themmes brode aged back doth ride,
> Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,
> There whylome wont the Templar knights to bide,
> Till they decayd through pride.

Indeed, it is the most elegant spot in the metropolis. What a transition for a countryman visiting London for the first time—the passing from the crowded Strand or Fleet-street, by unexpected avenues, into its magnificent ample squares, its classic green recesses! What a cheerful, liberal look hath that

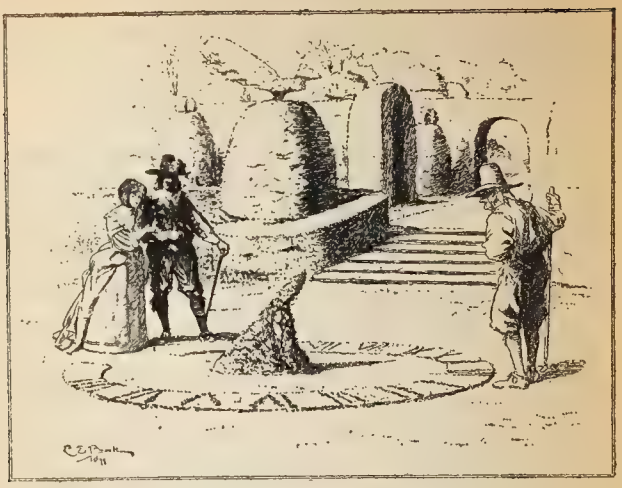
portion of it, which, from three sides, overlooks the greater garden ; that goodly pile

> Of building strong, albeit of Paper hight,

confronting, with massy contrast, the lighter, older, more fantastically shrouded one, named of Harcourt, with the cheerful Crown-office Row (place of my kindly engendure), right opposite the stately stream, which washes the garden-foot with her yet scarcely trade-polluted waters, and seems but just weaned from her Twickenham Naiades ! a man would give something to have been born in such places. What a collegiate aspect has that fine Elizabethan hall, where the fountain plays, which I have made to rise and fall, how many times ! to the astoundment of the young urchins, my contemporaries, who, not being able to guess at its recondite machinery, were almost tempted to hail the wondrous work as magic ! What an antique air had the now almost effaced sun-dials, with their moral inscriptions, seeming co-evals with that Time which they measured, and to take their revelations of its flight immediately from heaven, holding correspondence with the fountain of light ! How would the dark line steal imperceptibly on, watched by the eye of childhood, eager to detect its movement, never catched, nice as an evanescent cloud, or the first arrests of sleep !

> Ah ! yet doth beauty like a dial-hand
> Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived !

What a dead thing is a clock, with its ponderous embowelments of lead and brass, its pert or solemn dullness of communication, compared with the simple altar-like structure, and silent heart-language of the old dial ! It stood as the garden god of Christian gardens. Why is it almost every where vanished ?



"A pretty device of the gardener."

If its business-use be superseded by more elaborate inventions, its moral uses, its beauty, might have pleaded for its continuance. It spoke of moderate labours, of pleasures not protracted after sun-set, of temperance, and good-hours. It was the primitive clock, the horologe of the first world. Adam could scarce have missed it in Paradise. It was the measure appropriate for sweet plants and flowers to spring by, for the birds to apportion their silver warblings by, for flocks to pasture and be led to fold by. The shepherd "carved it out quaintly in the sun;" and, turning philosopher by the very occupation, provided it with mottos more touching than tombstones. It was a pretty device of the gardener, recorded by Marvell, who, in the days of artificial gardening, made a dial out of herbs and flowers. I must quote his verses a little higher up, for they are full, as all

his serious poetry was, of a witty delicacy. They will not come in awkwardly, I hope, in a talk of fountains and sun-dials. He is speaking of sweet garden scenes:

> What wondrous life is this I lead!
> Ripe apples drop about my head.
> The luscious clusters of the vine
> Upon my mouth do crush their wine.
> The nectarine, and curious peach,
> Into my hands themselves do reach.
> Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
> Insnared with flowers, I fall on grass.
> Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less
> Withdraws into its happiness.
> The mind, that ocean, where each kind
> Does straight its own resemblance find;
> Yet it creates, transcending these,
> Far other worlds, and other seas;
> Annihilating all that's made
> To a green thought in a green shade.
> Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
> Or at some fruit tree's mossy root,
> Casting the body's vest aside,
> My soul into the boughs does glide;
> There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
> Then whets and claps its silver wings;
> And, till prepared for longer flight,
> Waves in its plumes the various light.
> How well the skilful gardener drew,
> Of flowers and herbs, this dial new!
> Where, from above, the milder sun
> Does through a fragrant zodiac run:
> And, as it works, the industrious bee
> Computes its time as well as we.
> How could such sweet and wholesome hours
> Be reckon'd, but with herbs and flowers?[1]

The artificial fountains of the metropolis are, in like manner, fast vanishing. Most of them are dried up, or bricked over. Yet, where one is left, as in that little green nook behind the South Sea House, what a freshness it gives to the dreary pile! Four

[1] From a copy of verses entitled The Garden.

little winged marble boys used to play their virgin fancies, spouting out ever fresh streams from their innocent-wanton lips, in the square of Lincoln's-inn, when I was no bigger than they were figured. They are gone, and the spring choked up. The fashion, they tell me, is gone by, and these things are esteemed childish. Why not then gratify children, by letting them stand? Lawyers, I suppose, were children once. They are awakening images to them at least. Why must every thing smack of man, and mannish? Is the world all grown up? Is childhood dead? Or is there not in the bosoms of the wisest and the best some of the child's heart left, to respond to its earliest enchantments. The figures were grotesque. Are the stiff-wigged living figures, that still flitter and chatter about that area, less Gothic in appearance? or is the splutter of their hot rhetoric one half so refreshing and innocent as the little cool playful streams those exploded cherubs uttered?

They have lately gothicised the entrance to the Inner Temple-hall, and the library front, to assimilate them, I suppose, to the body of the hall, which they do not at all resemble. What is become of the winged horse that stood over the former? a stately arms! and who has removed those frescoes of the Virtues, which Italianized the end of the Paper-buildings?—my first hint of allegory! They must account to me for these things, which I miss so greatly.

The terrace is, indeed, left, which we used to call the parade; but the traces are passed away of the footsteps which made its pavement awful! It is become common and profane. The old benchers had it almost sacred to themselves, in the forepart of the day at least. They might not be sided or jostled. Their air and dress asserted the parade. You left

wide spaces betwixt you, when you passed them. We walk on even terms with their successors. The roguish eye of J——ll, ever ready to be delivered of a jest, almost invites a stranger to vie a repartee with it. But what insolent familiar durst have mated Thomas Coventry?—whose person was a quadrate, his step massy and elephantine, his face square as the lion's, his gait peremptory and path-keeping, indivertible from his way as a moving column, the scarecrow of his inferiors, the brow-beater of equals and superiors, who made a solitude of children wherever he came, for they fled his insufferable presence, as they would have shunned an Elisha bear. His growl was as thunder in their ears, whether he spake to them in mirth or in rebuke, his invitatory notes being, indeed, of all, the most repulsive and horrid. Clouds of snuff, aggravating the natural terrors of his speech, broke from each majestic nostril, darkening the air. He took it, not by pinches, but a palmful at once, diving for it under the mighty flaps of his old-fashioned waistcoat pocket; his waistcoat red and angry, his coat dark rappee, tinctured by dye original, and by adjuncts, with buttons of obsolete gold. And so he paced the terrace.

By his side a milder form was sometimes to be seen; the pensive gentility of Samuel Salt. They were coevals, and had nothing but that and their benchership in common. In politics Salt was a whig, and Coventry a staunch tory. Many a sarcastic growl did the latter cast out—for Coventry had a rough spinous humour—at the political confederates of his associate, which rebounded from the gentle bosom of the latter like cannon-balls from wool. You could not ruffle Samuel Salt.

S. had the reputation of being a very clever man, and of excellent discernment in the chamber practice of the law. I suspect his knowledge did not amount

to much. When a case of difficult disposition of money, testamentary or otherwise, came before him, he ordinarily handed it over with a few instructions to his man Lovel, who was a quick little fellow, and would despatch it out of hand by the light of natural understanding, of which he had an uncommon share. It was incredible what repute for talents S. enjoyed by the mere trick of gravity. He was a shy man; a child might pose him in a minute—indolent and procrastinating to the last degree. Yet men would give him credit for vast application in spite of himself. He was not to be trusted with himself with impunity. He never dressed for a dinner party but he forgot his sword—they wore swords then—or some other necessary part of his equipage. Lovel had his eye upon him on all these occasions, and ordinarily gave him his cue. If there was anything which he could speak unseasonably, he was sure to do it.—He was to dine at a relative's of the unfortunate Miss Blandy on the day of her execution;—and L. who had a wary foresight of his probable hallucinations, before he set out, schooled him with great anxiety not in any possible manner to allude to her story that day. S. promised faithfully to observe the injunction. He had not been seated in the parlour, where the company was expecting the dinner summons, four minutes, when, a pause in the conversation ensuing, he got up, looked out of window, and pulling down his ruffles—an ordinary motion with him—observed, "it was a gloomy day," and added, "Miss Blandy must be hanged by this time, I suppose." Instances of this sort were perpetual. Yet S. was thought by some of the greatest men of his time a fit person to be consulted, not alone in matters pertaining to the law, but in the ordinary niceties and embarrassments of conduct—from force of manner entirely. He never laughed. He had the same

Clouds of snuff.
a palmful at once

good fortune among the female world,—was a known toast with the ladies, and one or two are said to have died for love of him—I suppose, because he never trifled or talked gallantry with them, or paid them, indeed, hardly common attentions. He had a fine face and person, but wanted, methought, the spirit that should have shown them off with advantage to the women. His eye lacked lustre.—Not so, thought Susan P—— ; who, at the advanced age of sixty, was seen, in the cold evening time, unaccompanied, wetting the pavement of B——d Row with tears that fell in drops which might be heard, because her friend had died that day—he whom she had pursued with a hopeless passion for the last forty years—a passion, which years could not extinguish or abate ; nor the long resolved, yet gently enforced, puttings off of unrelenting bachelorhood dissuade from its cherished purpose. Mild Susan P——, thou hast now thy friend in heaven !

Thomas Coventry was a cadet of the noble family of that name. He passed his youth in contracted circumstances, which gave him early those parsimonious habits which in after-life never forsook him ; so that, with one windfall or another, about the time I knew him he was master of four or five hundred thousand pounds ; nor did he look, or walk, worth a moidore less. He lived in a gloomy house opposite the pump in Serjeant's-inn, Fleet-street. J., the counsel, is doing self-imposed penance in it, for what reason I divine not, at this day. C. had an agreeable seat at North Cray, where he seldom spent above a day or two at a time in the summer ; but preferred, during the hot months, standing at his window in this damp, close, well-like mansion, to watch, as he said, "the maids drawing water all day long." I suspect he had his within-door reasons for the preference. *Hic currus et arma fuêre.* He might think

his treasures more safe. His house had the aspect of a strong box. C. was a close hunks—a hoarder rather than a miser—or, if a miser, none of the mad Elwes breed, who have brought discredit upon a character, which cannot exist without certain admirable points of steadiness and unity of purpose. One may hate a true miser, but cannot, I suspect, so easily despise him. By taking care of the pence, he is often enabled to part with the pounds, upon a scale that leaves us careless generous fellows halting at an immeasurable distance behind. C. gave away 30,000*l.* at once in his life-time to a blind charity. His house-keeping was severely looked after, but he kept the table of a gentleman. He would know who came in and who went out of his house, but his kitchen chimney was never suffered to freeze.

Salt was his opposite in this, as in all—never knew what he was worth in the world; and having but a competency for his rank, which his indolent habits were little calculated to improve, might have suffered severely if he had not had honest people about him. Lovel took care of every thing. He was at once his clerk, his good servant, his dresser, his friend, his "flapper," his guide, stop-watch, auditor, treasurer. He did nothing without consulting Lovel, or failed in any thing without expecting and fearing his admonishing. He put himself almost too much in his hands, had they not been the purest in the world. He resigned his title almost to respect as a master, if L. could ever have forgotten for a moment that he was a servant.

I knew this Lovel. He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. A good fellow withal, and "would strike." In the cause of the oppressed he never considered inequalities, or calculated the number of his opponents. He once wrested a sword out of the hand of a man of quality that had drawn

upon him; and pommelled him severely with the hilt of it. The swordsman had offered insult to a female—an occasion upon which no odds against him could have prevented the interference of Lovel. He would stand next day bare-headed to the same person, modestly to excuse his interference—for L. never forgot rank, where something better was not concerned. L. was the liveliest little fellow breathing, had a face as gay as Garrick's, whom he was said greatly to resemble (I have a portrait of him which confirms it), possessed a fine turn for humorous poetry —next to Swift and Prior—moulded heads in clay or plaster of Paris to admiration, by the dint of natural genius merely; turned cribbage boards, and such small cabinet toys, to perfection; took a hand at quadrille or bowls with equal facility; made punch better than any man of his degree in England; had the merriest quips and conceits, and was altogether as brimful of rogueries and inventions as you could desire. He was a brother of the angle, moreover, and just such a free, hearty, honest companion as Mr Isaac Walton would have chosen to go a fishing with. I saw him in his old age and the decay of his faculties, palsy-smitten, in the last sad stage of human weakness—"a remnant most forlorn of what he was,"—yet even then his eye would light up upon the mention of his favourite Garrick. He was greatest, he would say, in Bayes—" was upon the stage nearly throughout the whole performance, and as busy as a bee." At intervals, too, he would speak of his former life, and how he came up a little boy from Lincoln to go to service, and how his mother cried at parting with him, and how he returned, after some few years' absence, in his smart new livery to see her, and she blessed herself at the change, and could hardly be brought to believe that it was "her own bairn." And then, the excitement subsiding, he would weep,

till I have wished that sad second-childhood might have a mother still to lay its head upon her lap. But the common mother of us all in no long time after received him gently into hers.

With Coventry, and with Salt, in their walks upon the terrace, most commonly Peter Pierson would join, to make up a third. They did not walk linked arm-in-arm in those days—"as now our stout triumvirs sweep the streets,"—but generally with both hands folded behind them for state, or with one at least behind, the other carrying a cane. P. was a benevolent, but not a prepossessing man. He had that in his face which you could not term unhappiness; it rather implied an incapacity of being happy. His cheeks were colourless, even to whiteness. His look was uninviting, resembling (but without his sourness) that of our great philanthropist. I know that he *did* good acts, but I could never make out what he *was*. Contemporary with these, but subordinate, was Daines Barrington—another oddity—he walked burly and square—in imitation, I think, of Coventry—howbeit he attained not to the dignity of his prototype. Nevertheless, he did pretty well, upon the strength of being a tolerable antiquarian, and having a brother a bishop. When the account of his year's treasurership came to be audited, the following singular charge was unanimously disallowed by the bench: "Item, disbursed Mr Allen, the gardener, twenty shillings, for stuff to poison the sparrows, by my orders." Next to him was old Barton—a jolly negation, who took upon him the ordering of the bills of fare for the parliament chamber, where the benchers dine—answering to the combination rooms at college—much to the easement of his less epicurean brethren. I know nothing more of him.—Then Read, and Twopenny—Read, good-humoured and personable—Twopenny, good-humoured, but thin,

"Their walks upon the terrace

and felicitous in jests upon his own figure. If T. was thin, Wharry was attenuated and fleeting. Many must remember him (for he was rather of later date) and his singular gait, which was performed by three steps and a jump regularly succeeding. The steps were little efforts, like that of a child beginning to walk; the jump comparatively vigorous, as a foot to an inch. Where he learned this figure, or what occasioned it, I could never discover. It was neither graceful in itself, nor seemed to answer the purpose any better than common walking. The extreme tenuity of his frame, I suspect, set him upon it. It was a trial of poising. Twopenny would often rally him upon his leanness, and hail him as Brother Lusty; but W. had no relish of a joke. His features were spiteful. I have heard that he would pinch his cat's ears extremely, when anything had offended him. Jackson—the omniscient Jackson he was called —was of this period. He had the reputation of possessing more multifarious knowledge than any man of his time. He was the Friar Bacon of the less literate portion of the Temple. I remember a pleasant passage, of the cook applying to him, with much formality of apology, for instructions how to write down *edge* bone of beef in his bill of commons. He was supposed to know, if any man in the world did. He decided the orthography to be—as I have given it—fortifying his authority with such anatomical reasons as dismissed the manciple (for the time) learned and happy. Some do spell it yet perversely, *aitch* bone, from a fanciful resemblance between its shape, and that of the aspirate so denominated. I had almost forgotten Mingay with the iron hand—but he was somewhat later. He had lost his right hand by some accident, and supplied it with a grappling hook, which he wielded with a tolerable adroitness. I detected the substitute, before I was

old enough to reason whether it were artificial or not. I remember the astonishment it raised in me. He was a blustering, loud-talking person; and I reconciled the phenomenon to my ideas as an emblem of power—somewhat like the horns in the forehead of Michael Angelo's Moses. Baron Maseres, who walks (or did till very lately) in the costume of the reign of George the Second, closes my imperfect recollections of the old benchers of the Inner Temple.

Fantastic forms, whither are ye fled? Or, if the like of you exist, why exist they no more for me? Ye inexplicable, half-understood appearances, why comes in reason to tear away the preternatural mist, bright or gloomy, that enshrouded you? Why make ye so sorry a figure in my relation, who made up to me—to my childish eyes—the mythology of the Temple? In those days I saw Gods, as "old men covered with a mantle," walking upon the earth. Let the dreams of classic idolatry perish,—extinct be the fairies and fairy trumpery of legendary fabling,—in the heart of childhood, there will, for ever, spring up a well of innocent or wholesome superstition—the seeds of exaggeration will be busy there, and vital—from every-day forms educing the unknown and the uncommon. In that little Goshen there will be light, when the grown world flounders about in the darkness of sense and materiality. While childhood, and while dreams, reducing childhood, shall be left, imagination shall not have spread her holy wings totally to fly the earth.

P.S. I have done injustice to the soft shade of Samuel Salt. See what it is to trust to imperfect memory, and the erring notices of childhood! Yet I protest I always thought that he had been a bachelor! This gentleman, R. N. informs me,

married young, and losing his lady in child-bed, within the first year of their union, fell into a deep melancholy, from the effects of which, probably, he never thoroughly recovered. In what a new light does this place his rejection (O call it by a gentler name!) of mild Susan P——, unravelling into beauty certain peculiarities of this very shy and retiring character!—Henceforth let no one receive the narratives of Elia for true records! They are, in truth, but shadows of fact—verisimilitudes, not verities—or sitting but upon the remote edges and outskirts of history. He is no such honest chronicler as R. N., and would have done better perhaps to have consulted that gentleman, before he sent these incondite reminiscences to press. But the worthy sub-treasurer—who respects his old and his new masters—would but have been puzzled at the indecorous liberties of Elia. The good man wots not, peradventure, of the license which *Magazines* have arrived at in this plain-speaking age, or hardly dreams of their existence beyond the *Gentleman's*—his furthest monthly excursions in this nature having been long confined to the holy ground of honest *Urban's* obituary. May it be long before his own name shall help to swell those columns of unenvied flattery!—Meantime, O ye New Benchers of the Inner Temple, cherish him kindly, for he is himself the kindliest of human creatures. Should infirmities over-take him—he is yet in green and vigorous senility—make allowances for them, remembering that "ye yourselves are old." So may the Winged Horse, your ancient badge and cognisance, still flourish! so may future Hookers and Seldens illustrate your church and chambers! So may the sparrows, in default of more melodious quiristers, unpoisoned hop about your walks! so may the fresh-coloured and cleanly nursery maid, who, by leave, airs her playful charge in your stately gardens,

drop her prettiest blushing curtsy as ye pass, reductive of juvenescent emotion! so may the younkers of this generation eye you, pacing your stately terrace, with the same superstitious veneration, with which the child Elia gazed on the Old Worthies that solemnized the parade before ye!

GRACE BEFORE MEAT

THE custom of saying grace at meals had, probably, its origin in the early times of the world, and the hunter-state of man, when dinners were precarious things, and a full meal was something more than a common blessing; when a belly-full was a windfall, and looked like a special providence. In the shouts and triumphal songs with which, after a season of sharp abstinence, a lucky booty of deer's or goat's flesh would naturally be ushered home, existed, perhaps, the germ of the modern grace. It is not otherwise easy to be understood, why the blessing of food—the act of eating—should have had a particular expression of thanksgiving annexed to it, distinct from that implied and silent gratitude with which we are expected to enter upon the enjoyment of the many other various gifts and good things of existence.

I own that I am disposed to say grace upon twenty other occasions in the course of the day besides my

dinner. I want a form for setting out upon a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, or a solved problem. Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts—a grace before Milton—a grace before Shakespeare—a devotional exercise proper to be said before reading the Fairy Queen? —but, the received ritual having prescribed these forms to the solitary ceremony of manducation, I shall confine my observations to the experience which I have had of the grace, properly so-called; commending my new scheme for extension to a niche in the grand philosophical, poetical, and perchance in part heretical, liturgy, now compiling by my friend Homo Humanus, for the use of a certain snug congregation of Utopian Rabelæsian Christians, no matter where assembled.

The form then of the benediction before eating has its beauty at a poor man's table, or at the simple and unprovocative repasts of children. It is here that the grace becomes exceedingly graceful. The indigent man, who hardly knows whether he shall have a meal the next day or not, sits down to his fare with a present sense of the blessing, which can be but feebly acted by the rich, into whose minds the conception of wanting a dinner could never, but by some extreme theory, have entered. The proper end of food—the animal sustenance—is barely contemplated by them. The poor man's bread is his daily bread, literally his bread for the day. Their courses are perennial.

Again, the plainest diet seems the fittest to be preceded by the grace. That which is least stimulative to appetite, leaves the mind most free for foreign considerations. A man may feel thankful, heartily thankful, over a dish of plain mutton with turnips, and have leisure to reflect upon the ordinance and institution of eating; when he shall confess a

perturbation of mind, inconsistent with the purposes of the grace, at the presence of venison or turtle. When I have sate (a *rarus hospes*) at rich men's tables, with the savoury soup and messes steaming up the nostrils, and moistening the lips of the guests with desire and a distracted choice, I have felt the introduction of that ceremony to be unseasonable. With the ravenous orgasm upon you, it seems impertinent to interpose a religious sentiment. It is a confusion of purpose to mutter out praises from a mouth that waters. The heats of epicurism put out the gentle flame of devotion. The incense which rises round is pagan, and the belly-god intercepts it for his own. The very excess of the provision beyond the needs, takes away all sense of proportion between the end and means. The giver is veiled by his gifts. You are startled at the injustice of returning thanks—for what?—for having too much, while so many starve. It is to praise the Gods amiss.

I have observed this awkwardness felt, scarce consciously perhaps, by the good man who says the grace. I have seen it in clergymen and others—a sort of shame—a sense of the co-presence of circumstances which unhallow the blessing. After a devotional tone put on for a few seconds, how rapidly the speaker will fall into his common voice, helping himself or his neighbour, as if to get rid of some uneasy sensation of hypocrisy. Not that the good man was a hypocrite, or was not most conscientious in the discharge of the duty; but he felt in his inmost mind the incompatibility of the scene and the viands before him with the exercise of a calm and rational gratitude.

I hear somebody exclaim,—Would you have Christians sit down at table, like hogs to their troughs, without remembering the Giver?—no—I would have them sit down as Christians, remembering the

Giver, and less like hogs. Or if their appetites must run riot, and they must pamper themselves with delicacies for which east and west are ransacked, I would have them postpone their benediction to a fitter season, when appetite is laid; when the still small voice can be heard, and the reason of the grace returns—with temperate diet and restricted dishes. Gluttony and surfeiting are no proper occasions for thanksgiving. When Jeshurun waxed fat, we read that he kicked. Virgil knew the harpy-nature better, when he put into the mouth of Celæno any thing but a blessing. We may be gratefully sensible of the deliciousness of some kinds of food beyond others, though that is a meaner and inferior gratitude: but the proper object of the grace is sustenance, not relishes; daily bread, not delicacies; the means of life, and not the means of pampering the carcass. With what frame or composure, I wonder, can a city chaplain pronounce his benediction at some great Hall feast, when he knows that his last concluding pious word—and that, in all probability, the sacred name which he preaches—is but the signal for so many impatient harpies to commence their foul orgies, with as little sense of true thankfulness (which is temperance) as those Virgilian fowl! It is well if the good man himself does not feel his devotions a little clouded, those foggy sensuous steams mingling with and polluting the pure altar sacrifice.

The severest satire upon full tables and surfeits is the banquet which Satan, in the "Paradise Regained," provides for a temptation in the wilderness:

> A table richly spread in regal mode,
> With dishes piled, and meats of noblest sort
> And savour; beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
> In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,
> Gris-amber-steamed; all fish from sea or shore,
> Freshet or purling brook, for which was drained
> Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.

The Tempter, I warrant you, thought these cates would go down without the recommendatory preface of a benediction. They are like to be short graces where the devil plays the host.—I am afraid the poet wants his usual decorum in this place. Was he thinking of the old Roman luxury, or of a gaudy day at Cambridge? This was a temptation fitter for a Heliogabalus. The whole banquet is too civic and culinary, and the accompaniments altogether a profanation of that deep, abstracted, holy scene. The mighty artillery of sauces, which the cook-fiend conjures up, is out of proportion to the simple wants and plain hunger of the guest. He that disturbed him in his dreams, from his dreams might have been taught better. To the temperate fantasies of the famished Son of God, what sort of feasts presented themselves?—He dreamed indeed,

> ———As appetite is wont to dream,
> Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet.

But what meats?—

> Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood,
> And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
> Food to Elijah bringing, even and morn
> Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought:
> He saw the prophet also how he fled
> Into the desert, and how there he slept
> Under a juniper; then how awaked
> He found his supper on the coals prepared,
> And by the angel was bid rise and eat,
> And ate the second time after repose,
> The strength whereof sufficed him forty days:
> Sometimes, that with Elijah he partook,
> Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.

Nothing in Milton is finelier fancied than these temperate dreams of the divine Hungerer. To which of these two visionary banquets, think you, would the introduction of what is called the grace have been most fitting and pertinent?

GRACE BEFORE MEAT

Theoretically I am no enemy to graces; but practically I own that (before meat especially) they seem to involve something awkward and unseasonable. Our appetites, of one or another kind, are excellent spurs to our reason, which might otherwise but feebly set about the great ends of preserving and continuing the species. They are fit blessings to be contemplated at a distance with a becoming gratitude; but the moment of appetite (the judicious reader will apprehend me) is, perhaps, the least fit season for that exercise. The Quakers who go about their business, of every description, with more calmness than we, have more title to the use of these benedictory prefaces. I have always admired their silent grace, and the more because I have observed their application to the meat and drink following to be less passionate and sensual than ours. They are neither gluttons nor wine-bibbers as a people. They eat, as a horse bolts his chopt hay, with indifference, calmness, and cleanly circumstances. They neither grease nor slop themselves. When I see a citizen in his bib and tucker, I cannot imagine it a surplice.

I am no Quaker at my food. I confess I am not indifferent to the kinds of it. Those unctuous morsels of deer's flesh were not made to be received with dispassionate services. I hate a man who swallows it, affecting not to know what he is eating. I suspect his taste in higher matters. I shrink instinctively from one who professes to like minced veal. There is a physiognomical character in the tastes for food. C—— holds that a man cannot have a pure mind who refuses apple-dumplings. I am not certain but he is right. With the decay of my first innocence, I confess a less and less relish daily for those innocuous cates. The whole vegetable tribe have lost their gust with me. Only I stick to asparagus, which still seems to inspire gentle thoughts.

"These exercises . . . have little in them of grace or gracefulness."

I am impatient and querulous under culinary disappointments, as to come home at the dinner hour, for instance, expecting some savoury mess, and to find one quite tasteless and sapidless. Butter ill melted—that commonest of kitchen failures—puts me beside my tenour.—The author of the "Rambler" used to make inarticulate animal noises over a favourite food. Was this the music quite proper to be preceded by the grace? or would the pious man have done better to postpone his devotions to a season when the blessing might be contemplated with less perturbation? I quarrel with no man's tastes, nor would set my thin face against those excellent things, in their way, jollity and feasting. But as these exercises, however laudable, have little in them of grace or gracefulness, a man should be sure, before he ventures so to grace them, that while he is pre-

tending his devotions otherwise, he is not secretly kissing his hand to some great fish—his Dagon—with a special consecration of no ark but the fat tureen before him. Graces are the sweet preluding strains to the banquets of angels and children; to the roots and severer repasts of the Chartreuse; to the slender, but not slenderly acknowledged, refection of the poor and humble man: but at the heaped-up boards of the pampered and the luxurious they become of dissonant mood, less timed and tuned to the occasion, methinks, than the noise of those better befitting organs would be, which children hear tales of, at Hog's Norton. We sit too long at our meals, or are too curious in the study of them, or too disordered in our application to them, or engross too great a portion of those good things (which should be common) to our share, to be able with any grace to say grace. To be thankful for what we grasp exceeding our proportion is to add hypocrisy to injustice. A lurking sense of this truth is what makes the performance of this duty so cold and spiritless a service at most tables. In houses where the grace is as indispensable as the napkin, who has not seen that never settled question arise, as to *who shall say it;* while the good man of the house and the visitor clergyman, or some other guest belike of next authority from years or gravity, shall be bandying about the office between them as a matter of compliment, each of them not unwilling to shift the awkward burthen of an equivocal duty from his own shoulders?

I once drank tea in company with two Methodist divines of different persuasions, whom it was my fortune to introduce to each other for the first time that evening. Before the first cup was handed round, one of these reverend gentlemen put it to the other, with all due solemnity, whether he chose to *say any*

thing. It seems it is the custom with some sectaries to put up a short prayer before this meal also. His reverend brother did not at first quite apprehend him, but upon an explanation, with little less importance he made answer, that it was not a custom known in his church: in which courteous evasion the other acquiescing for good manners' sake, or in compliance with a weak brother, the supplementary or tea-grace was waived altogether. With what spirit might not Lucian have painted two priests, of *his* religion, playing into each other's hands the compliment of performing or omitting a sacrifice,—the hungry God meantime, doubtful of his incense, with expectant nostrils hovering over the two flamens, and (as between two stools) going away in the end without his supper.

A short form upon these occasions is felt to want reverence; a long one, I am afraid, cannot escape the charge of impertinence. I do not quite approve of the epigrammatic conciseness with which that equivocal wag (but my pleasant school-fellow) C. V. L., when importuned for a grace, used to inquire, first slyly leering down the table, "Is there no clergyman here?"—significantly adding, "thank G—." Nor do I think our old form at school quite pertinent, where we were used to preface our bald bread and cheese suppers with a preamble, connecting with that humble blessing a recognition of benefits the most awful and overwhelming to the imagination which religion has to offer. *Non tunc illis erat locus.* I remember we were put to it to reconcile the phrase "good creatures," upon which the blessing rested, with thefare set before us, wilfully understanding that expression in a low and animal sense,—till some one recalled a legend, which told how in the golden days of Christ's, the young Hospitallers were wont to have smoking joints of roast meat upon their

nightly boards, till some pious benefactor, commiserating the decencies, rather than the palates, of the children, commuted our flesh for garments, and gave us—*horresco referens*—trowsers instead of mutton.

MY FIRST PLAY

AT the north end of Cross-court there yet stands a portal, of some architectural pretensions, though reduced to humble use, serving at present for an entrance to a printing-office. This old door-way, if you are young, reader, you may not know was the identical pit entrance to Old Drury—Garrick's Drury—all of it that is left. I never pass it without shaking some forty years from off my shoulders, recurring to the evening when I passed through it to see *my first play*. The afternoon had been wet, and the condition of our going (the elder folks and myself) was, that the rain should cease. With what a beating heart did I watch from the window the puddles, from the stillness of which I was taught to prognosticate the desired cessation! I seem to remember the last spurt, and the glee with which I ran to announce it.

We went with orders, which my godfather F. had sent us. He kept the oil shop (now Davies's) at the

corner of Featherstone-building, in Holborn. F. was a tall grave person, lofty in speech, and had pretensions above his rank. He associated in those days with John Palmer, the comedian, whose gait and bearing he seemed to copy; if John (which is quite as likely) did not rather borrow somewhat of his manner from my godfather. He was also known to, and visited by, Sheridan. It was to his house in Holborn that young Brinsley brought his first wife on her elopement with him from a boarding-school at Bath—the beautiful Maria Linley. My parents were present (over a quadrille table) when he arrived in the evening with his harmonious charge.—From either of these connexions it may be inferred that my godfather could command an order for the then Drury-lane theatre at pleasure—and, indeed, a pretty liberal issue of those cheap billets, in Brinsley's easy autograph, I have heard him say was the sole remuneration which he had received for many years' nightly illumination of the orchestra and various avenues of that theatre—and he was content it should be so. The honour of Sheridan's familiarity—or supposed familiarity—was better to my godfather than money.

F. was the most gentlemanly of oilmen; grandiloquent, yet courteous. His delivery of the commonest matters of fact was Ciceronian. He had two Latin words almost constantly in his mouth (how odd sounds Latin from an oilman's lips!), which my better knowledge since has enabled me to correct. In strict pronunciation they should have been sounded *vice versâ*—but in those young years they impressed me with more awe than they would now do, read aright from Seneca or Varro—in his own peculiar pronunciation, monosyllabically elaborated, or Anglicized, into something like *verse verse*. By an imposing manner, and the help of these distorted syllables, he climbed (but that was little) to the highest

parochial honours which St. Andrew's has to bestow.

He is dead—and thus much I thought due to his memory, both for my first orders (little wondrous talismans !—slight keys, and insignificant to outward sight, but opening to me more than Arabian paradises !) and moreover, that by his testamentary beneficence I came into possession of the only landed property which I could ever call my own—situate near the road-way village of pleasant Puckeridge, in Hertfordshire. When I journeyed down to take possession, and planted foot on my own ground, the stately habits of the donor descended upon me, and I strode (shall I confess the vanity?) with larger paces over my allotment of three quarters of an acre, with its commodious mansion in the midst, with the feeling of an English freeholder that all betwixt sky and centre was my own. The estate has passed into more prudent hands, and nothing but an agrarian can restore it.

In those days were pit orders. Beshrew the uncomfortable manager who abolished them !—with one of these we went. I remember the waiting at the door—not that which is left—but between that and an inner door in shelter—O when shall I be such an expectant again !—with the cry of nonpareils, an indispensable play-house accompaniment in those days. As near as I can recollect, the fashionable pronunciation of the theatrical fruiteresses then was, "Chase some oranges, chase some numparels, chase a bill of the play ;"—chase *pro* chuse. But when we got in, and I beheld the green curtain that veiled a heaven to my imagination, which was soon to be disclosed—the breathless anticipations I endured ! I had seen something like it in the plate prefixed to Troilus and Cressida, in Rowe's Shakespeare—the tent scene with Diomede—and a sight of that plate can always bring

back in a measure the feeling of that evening.—The boxes at that time, full of well-dressed women of quality, projected over the pit; and the pilasters reaching down were adorned with a glistening substance (I know not what) under glass (as it seemed), resembling—a homely fancy—but I judged it to be sugar-candy—yet, to my raised imagination, divested of its homelier qualities, it appeared a glorified candy! —The orchestra lights at length arose, those "fair Auroras!" Once the bell sounded. It was to ring out yet once again—and, incapable of the anticipation, I reposed my shut eyes in a sort of resignation upon the maternal lap. It rang the second time. The curtain drew up—I was not past six years old—and the play was Artaxerxes!

I had dabbled a little in the Universal History—the ancient part of it—and here was the court of Persia. It was being admitted to a sight of the past. I took no proper interest in the action going on, for I understood not its import—but I heard the word Darius, and I was in the midst of Daniel. All feeling was absorbed in vision. Gorgeous vests, gardens, palaces, princesses, passed before me. I knew not players. I was in Persepolis for the time; and the burning idol of their devotion almost converted me into a worshipper. I was awe-struck, and believed those significations to be something more than elemental fires. It was all enchantment and a dream. No such pleasure has since visited me but in dreams. —Harlequin's invasion followed; where, I remember, the transformation of the magistrates into reverend beldams seemed to me a piece of grave historic justice, and the tailor carrying his own head to be as sober a verity as the legend of St Denys.

The next play to which I was taken was the Lady of the Manor, of which, with the exception of some scenery, very faint traces are left in my memory. It

was followed by a pantomime, called Lun's Ghost—a satiric touch, I apprehend, upon Rich, not long since dead—but to my apprehension (too sincere for satire), Lun was as remote a piece of antiquity as Lud —the father of a line of Harlequins—transmitting his dagger of lath (the wooden sceptre) through countless ages. I saw the primeval Motley come from his silent tomb in a ghastly vest of white patch-work, like the apparition of a dead rainbow. So Harlequins (thought I) look when they are dead.

My third play followed in quick succession. It was the Way of the World. I think I must have sat at it as grave as a judge ; for, I remember, the hysteric affectations of good Lady Wishfort affected me like some solemn tragic passion. Robinson Crusoe followed ; in which Crusoe, man Friday, and the parrot, were as good and authentic as in the story.—The clownery and pantaloonery of these pantomimes have clean passed out of my head. I believe, I no more laughed at them, than at the same age I should have been disposed to laugh at the grotesque Gothic heads (seeming to me then replete with devout meaning) that gape, and grin, in stone around the inside of the old Round Church (my church) of the Templars.

I saw these plays in the season 1781–2, when I was from six to seven years old. After the intervention of six or seven other years (for at school all playgoing was inhibited) I again entered the doors of a theatre. That old Artaxerxes evening had never done ringing in my fancy. I expected the same feelings to come again with the same occasion. But we differ from ourselves less at sixty and sixteen, than the latter does from six. In that interval what had I not lost ! At the first period I knew nothing, understood nothing, discriminated nothing. I felt all, loved all, wondered all—

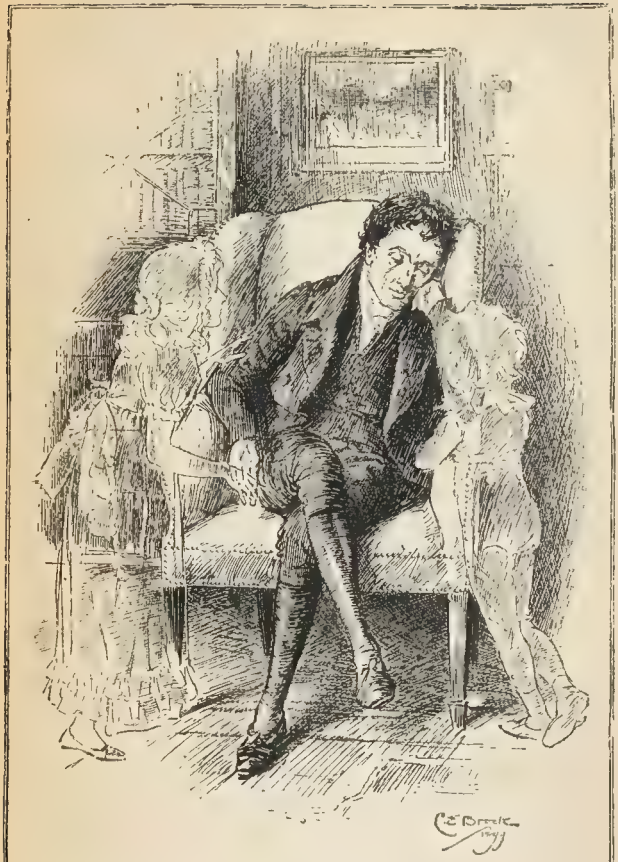
Was nourished, I could not tell how—

I had left the temple a devotee, and was returned a rationalist. The same things were there materially; but the emblem, the reference, was gone !—The green curtain was no longer a veil, drawn between two worlds, the unfolding of which was to bring back past ages, to present "a royal ghost,"—but a certain quantity of green baize, which was to separate the audience for a given time from certain of their fellow-men who were to come forward and pretend those parts. The lights—the orchestra lights—came up a clumsy machinery. The first ring, and the second ring, was now but a trick of the prompter's bell—which had been, like the note of the cuckoo, a phantom of a voice, no hand seen or guessed at which ministered to its warning. The actors were men and women painted. I thought the fault was in them; but it was in myself, and the alteration which those many centuries—of six short twelve-months—had wrought in me.—Perhaps it was fortunate for me that the play of the evening was but an indifferent comedy, as it gave me time to crop some unreasonable expectations, which might have interfered with the genuine emotions with which I was soon after enabled to enter upon the first appearance to me of Mrs Siddons in Isabella. Comparison and retrospection soon yielded to the present attraction of the scene; and the theatre became to me, upon a new stock, the most delightful of recreations.

DREAM-CHILDREN; A REVERIE

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called up-

braiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by every body, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and



"My little ones crept about me

religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm;" and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eye-brows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grand-children, having us to the great-house in the holydays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-

pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slily deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grand-children, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago,

such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech; "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we

have existence, and a name"—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

DISTANT CORRESPONDENTS

In a Letter to B. F. Esq. at Sydney, New South Wales

MY dear F.—When I think how welcome the sight of a letter from the world where you were born must be to you in that strange one to which you have been transplanted, I feel some compunctious visitings at my long silence. But, indeed, it is no easy effort to set about a correspondence at our distance. The weary world of waters between us oppresses the imagination. It is difficult to conceive how a scrawl of mine should ever stretch across it. It is a sort of presumption to expect that one's thoughts should live so far. It is like writing for posterity; and reminds me of one of Mrs Rowe's superscriptions, "Alcander to Strephon, in the shades." Cowley's Post-Angel is no more than would be expedient in such an intercourse. One drops a packet at Lombard-street, and in twenty-four hours a friend

in Cumberland gets it as fresh as if it came in ice. It is only like whispering through a long trumpet. But suppose a tube let down from the moon, with yourself at one end, and *the man* at the other; it would be some balk to the spirit of conversation, if you knew that the dialogue exchanged with that interesting theosophist would take two or three revolutions of a higher luminary in its passage. Yet for aught I know, you may be some parasangs nigher that primitive idea—Plato's man—than we in England here have the honour to reckon ourselves.

Epistolary matter usually compriseth three topics; news, sentiment, and puns. In the latter, I include all non-serious subjects; or subjects serious in themselves, but treated after my fashion, non-seriously.—And first, for news. In them the most desirable circumstance, I suppose, is that they shall be true. But what security can I have that what I now send you for truth shall not before you get it unaccountably turn into a lie? For instance, our mutual friend P. is at this present writing—*my Now*—in good health, and enjoys a fair share of worldly reputation. You are glad to hear it. This is natural and friendly. But at this present reading—*your Now*—he may possibly be in the Bench, or going to be hanged, which in reason ought to abate something of your transport (*i.e.* at hearing he was well, &c.), or at least considerably to modify it. I am going to the play this evening, to have a laugh with Munden. You have no theatre, I think you told me, in your land of d——d realities. You naturally lick your lips, and envy me my felicity. Think but a moment, and you will correct the hateful emotion. Why, it is Sunday morning with you, and 1823. This confusion of tenses, this grand solecism of *two presents*, is in a degree common to all postage. But if I sent you word to Bath or the Devises, that I was expecting the aforesaid treat this evening, though

at the moment you received the intelligence my full feast of fun would be over, yet there would be for a day or two after, as you would well know, a smack, a relish left upon my mental palate, which would give rational encouragement for you to foster a portion at least of the disagreeable passion, which it was in part my intention to produce. But ten months hence your envy or your sympathy would be as useless as a passion spent upon the dead. Not only does truth, in these long intervals, un-essence herself, but (what is harder) one cannot venture a crude fiction for the fear that it may ripen into a truth upon the voyage. What a wild improbable banter I put upon you some three years since——of Will Weatherall having married a servant-maid! I remember gravely consulting you how we were to receive her—for Will's wife was in no case to be rejected; and your no less serious replication in the matter; how tenderly you advised an abstemious introduction of literary topics before the lady, with a caution not to be too forward in bringing on the carpet matters more within the sphere of her intelligence; your deliberate judgment, or rather wise suspension of sentence, how far jacks, and spits, and mops, could with propriety be introduced as subjects; whether the conscious avoiding of all such matters in discourse would not have a worse look than the taking of them casually in our way; in what manner we should carry ourselves to our maid Becky, Mrs William Weatherall being by; whether we should show more delicacy, and a truer sense of respect for Will's wife, by treating Becky with our customary chiding before her, or by an unusual deferential civility paid to Becky as to a person of great worth, but thrown by the caprice of fate into a humble station. There were difficulties, I remember, on both sides, which you did me the favour to state with the precision of a lawyer, united to the tenderness of a friend. I

laughed in my sleeve at your solemn pleadings, when lo! while I was valuing myself upon this flam put upon you in New South Wales, the devil in England, jealous possibly of any lie-children not his own, or working after my copy, has actually instigated our friend (not three days since) to the commission of a matrimony, which I had only conjured up for your diversion. William Weatherall has married Mrs Cotterel's maid. But to take it in its truest sense, you will see, my dear F., that news from me must become history to you; which I neither profess to write, nor indeed care much for reading. No person, under a diviner, can with any prospect of veracity conduct a correspondence at such an arm's length. Two prophets, indeed, might thus interchange intelligence with effect; the epoch of the writer (Habakkuk) falling in with the true present time of the receiver (Daniel); but then we are no prophets.

Then as to sentiment. It fares little better with that. This kind of dish, above all, requires to be served up hot; or sent off in water-plates, that your friend may have it almost as warm as yourself. If it have time to cool, it is the most tasteless of all cold meats. I have often smiled at a conceit of the late Lord C. It seems that travelling somewhere about Geneva, he came to some pretty green spot, or nook, where a willow, or something, hung so fantastically and invitingly over a stream—was it?—or a rock?—no matter—but the stillness and the repose, after a weary journey 'tis likely, in a languid moment of his lordship's hot restless life, so took his fancy, that he could imagine no place so proper, in the event of his death, to lay his bones in. This was all very natural and excusable as a sentiment, and shows his character in a very pleasing light. But when from a passing sentiment it came to be an act; and when by a

positive testamentary disposal, his remains were actually carried all that way from England; who was there, some desperate sentimentalists excepted, that did not ask the question, Why could not his lordship have found a spot as solitary, a nook as romantic, a tree as green and pendent, with a stream as emblematic to his purpose, in Surrey, in Dorset, or in Devon? Conceive the sentiment boarded up, freighted, entered at the Custom House (startling the tide-waiters with the novelty), hoisted into a ship. Conceive it pawed about and handled between the rude jests of tarpaulin ruffians—a thing of its delicate texture—the salt bilge wetting it till it became as vapid as a damaged lustring. Suppose it in material danger (mariners have some superstition about sentiments) of being tossed over in a fresh gale to some propitiatory shark (spirit of Saint Gothard, save us from a quietus so foreign to the deviser's purpose!) but it has happily evaded a fishy consummation. Trace it then to its lucky landing—at Lyons shall we say?—I have not the map before me—jostled upon four men's shoulders—baiting at this town—stopping to refresh at t'other village—waiting a passport here, a license there; the sanction of the magistracy in this district, the concurrence of the ecclesiastics in that canton; till at length it arrives at its destination, tired out and jaded, from a brisk sentiment, into a feature of silly pride or tawdry senseless affectation. How few sentiments, my dear F., I am afraid we can set down, in the sailor's phrase, as quite sea-worthy.

Lastly, as to the agreeable levities, which, though contemptible in bulk, are the twinkling corpuscula which should irradiate a right friendly epistle—your puns and small jests are, I apprehend, extremely circumscribed in their sphere of action. They are so far from a capacity of being packed up and sent beyond sea, they will scarce endure to be transported

by hand from this room to the next. Their vigour is as the instant of their birth. Their nutriment for their brief existence is the intellectual atmosphere of the by-standers: or this last, is the fine slime of Nilus—the *melior lutus*,—whose maternal recipiency is as necessary as the *sol pater* to their equivocal generation. A pun hath a hearty kind of present ear-kissing smack with it; you can no more transmit it in its pristine flavour, than you can send a kiss.—Have you not tried in some instances to palm off a yesterday's pun upon a gentleman, and has it answered? Not but it was new to his hearing, but it did not seem to come new from you. It did not hitch in. It was like picking up at a village ale-house a two days old newspaper. You have not seen it before, but you resent the stale thing as an affront. This sort of merchandise above all requires a quick return. A pun, and its recognitory laugh, must be co-instantaneous. The one is the brisk lightning, the other the fierce thunder. A moment's interval, and the link is snapped. A pun is reflected from a friend's face as from a mirror. Who would consult his sweet visnomy, if the polished surface were two or three minutes (not to speak of twelve-months, my dear F.) in giving back its copy?

I cannot image to myself whereabout you are. When I try to fix it, Peter Wilkins's island comes across me. Sometimes you seem to be in the *Hades* of *Thieves*. I see Diogenes prying among you with his perpetual fruitless lantern. What must you be willing by this time to give for the sight of an honest man! You must almost have forgotten how *we* look. And tell me, what your Sydneyites do? are they th**v*ng all day long? Merciful heaven! what property can stand against such a depredation! The kangaroos —your Aborigines—do they keep their primitive simplicity un-Europe-tainted, with those little short

fore-puds, looking like a lesson framed by nature to the pickpocket! Marry, for diving into fobs they are rather lamely provided *à priori*; but if the hue and cry were once up, they would show as fair a pair of hind-shifters as the expertest loco-motor in the colony. —We hear the most improbable tales at this distance. Pray, is it true that the young Spartans among you are born with six fingers, which spoils their scanning? —It must look very odd; but use reconciles. For their scansion, it is less to be regretted, for if they take it into their heads to be poets, it is odds but they turn out, the greater part of them, vile plagiarists. —Is there much difference to see to between the son of a th**f, and the grandson? or where does the taint stop? Do you bleach in three or in four generations?—I have many questions to put, but ten Delphic voyages can be made in a shorter time than it will take to satisfy my scruples.—Do you grow your own hemp?—What is your staple trade, exclusive of the national profession, I mean? Your lock-smiths, I take it, are some of your great capitalists.

I am insensibly chatting to you as familiarly as when we used to exchange good-morrows out of our old contiguous windows, in pump-famed Hare-court in the Temple. Why did you ever leave that quiet corner? Why did I?—with its complement of four poor elms, from whose smoke-dyed barks, the theme of jesting ruralists, I picked my first lady-birds! My heart is as dry as that spring sometimes proves in a thirsty August, when I revert to the space that is between us; a length of passage enough to render obsolete the phrases of our English letters before they can reach you. But while I talk, I think you hear me,—thoughts dallying with vain surmise—

> Aye me! while thee the seas and sounding shores
> Hold far away.

Come back, before I am grown into a very old man, so as you shall hardly know me. Come, before Bridget walks on crutches. Girls whom you left children have become sage matrons, while you are tarrying there. The blooming Miss W——r (you remember Sally W——r) called upon us yesterday, an aged crone. Folks, whom you knew, die off every year. Formerly, I thought that death was wearing out,—I stood ramparted about with so many healthy friends. The departure of J. W. two springs back corrected my delusion. Since then the old divorcer has been busy. If you do not make haste to return, there will be little left to greet you, of me, or mine.

THE PRAISE OF CHIMNEY-SWEEPERS

I LIKE to meet a sweep—understand me—not a grown sweeper—old chimney-sweepers are by no means attractive—but one of those tender novices, blooming through their first nigritude, the maternal washings not quite effaced from the cheek—such as come forth with the dawn, or somewhat earlier, with their little professional notes sounding like the *peep peep* of a young sparrow; or liker to the matin lark should I pronounce them, in their aerial ascents not seldom anticipating the sun-rise?

I have a kindly yearning toward these dim specks —poor blots—innocent blacknesses—

I reverence these young Africans of our own growth—these almost clergy imps, who sport their cloth without assumption; and from their little pulpits (the tops of chimneys), in the nipping air of a December morning, preach a lesson of patience to mankind.

When a child, what a mysterious pleasure it was

to witness their operation! to see a chit no bigger than one's-self enter, one knew not by what process, into what seemed the *fauces Averni*—to pursue him in imagination, as he went sounding on through so many dark stifling caverns, horrid shades!—to shudder with the idea that "now, surely, he must be lost for ever!"—to revive at hearing his feeble shout of discovered day-light—and then (O fulness of delight) running out of doors, to come just in time to see the sable phenomenon emerge in safety, the brandished weapon of his art victorious like some flag waved over a conquered citadel! I seem to remember having been told, that a bad sweep was once left in a stack with his brush, to indicate which way the wind blew. It was an awful spectacle certainly; not much unlike the old stage direction in Macbeth, where the "Apparition of a child crowned, with a tree in his hand, rises."

Reader, if thou meetest one of these small gentry in thy early rambles, it is good to give him a penny. It is better to give him two-pence. If it be starving weather, and to the proper troubles of his hard occupation, a pair of kibed heels (no unusual accompaniment) be superadded, the demand on thy humanity will surely rise to a tester.

There is a composition, the ground-work of which I have understood to be the sweet wood 'yclept sassafras. This wood boiled down to a kind of tea, and tempered with an infusion of milk and sugar, hath to some tastes a delicacy beyond the China luxury. I know not how thy palate may relish it; for myself, with every deference to the judicious Mr Read, who hath time out of mind kept open a shop (the only one he avers in London) for the vending of this "wholesome and pleasant beverage," on the south side of Fleet-street, as thou approachest Bridge-street—*the only Salopian house*,—I have never yet

"It is good to give him a penny."

adventured to dip my own particular lip in a basin of his commended ingredients—a cautious premonition to the olfactories constantly whispering to me, that my stomach must infallibly, with all due courtesy, decline it. Yet I have seen palates, otherwise not uninstructed in dietetical elegances, sup it up with avidity.

I know not by what particular conformation of the organ it happens, but I have always found that this composition is surprisingly gratifying to the palate of a young chimney-sweeper—whether the oily particles (sassafras is slightly oleaginous) do attentuate and soften the fuliginous concretions, which are sometimes found (in dissections) to adhere to the roof of the mouth in these unfledged practitioners; or whether Nature, sensible that she had mingled too much of bitter wood in the lot of these raw victims, caused to grow out of the earth her sassafras for a sweet lenitive—but so it is, that no possible taste or odour to the senses of a young chimney-sweeper can convey a delicate excitement comparable to this mixture. Being penniless, they will yet hang their black heads over the ascending steam, to gratify one sense if possible, seemingly no less pleased than those domestic animals—cats—when they purr over a new-found sprig of valerian. There is something more in these sympathies than philosophy can inculcate.

Now albeit Mr Read boasteth, not without reason, that his is the *only Salopian house;* yet be it known to thee, reader—if thou art one who keepest what are called good hours, thou art haply ignorant of the fact—he hath a race of industrious imitators, who from stalls, and under open sky, dispense the same savoury mess to humbler customers, at that dead time of the dawn, when (as extremes meet) the rake, reeling home from his midnight cups, and the hard-handed artisan leaving his bed to resume the premature labours of the

day, jostle, not unfrequently to the manifest disconcerting of the former, for the honours of the pavement. It is the time when, in summer, between the expired and the not yet relumined kitchen-fires, the kennels of our fair metropolis give forth their least satisfactory odours. The rake, who wisheth to dissipate his o'er-night vapours in more grateful coffee, curses the ungenial fume, as he passeth; but the artisan stops to taste, and blesses the fragrant breakfast.

This is *Saloop*—the precocious herb-woman's darling—the delight of the early gardener, who transports his smoking cabbages by break of day from Hammersmith to Covent Garden's famed piazzas—the delight, and, oh I fear, too often the envy, of the unpennied sweep. Him shouldest thou haply encounter, with his dim visage pendent over the grateful steam, regale him with a sumptuous basin (it will cost thee but three half-pennies) and a slice of delicate bread and butter (an added half-penny)—so may thy culinary fires, eased of the o'er-charged secretions from thy worse-placed hospitalities, curl up a lighter volume to the welkin—so may the descending soot never taint thy costly well-ingredienced soups—nor the odious cry, quick-reaching from street to street, of the *fired chimney*, invite the rattling engines from ten adjacent parishes, to disturb for a casual scintillation thy peace and pocket!

I am by nature extremely susceptible of street affronts; the jeers and taunts of the populace; the low-bred triumph they display over the casual trip, or splashed stocking, of a gentleman. Yet can I endure the jocularity of a young sweep with something more than forgiveness.—In the last winter but one, pacing along Cheapside with my accustomed precipitation when I walk westward, a treacherous slide brought me upon my back in an instant. I scrambled up with pain and shame enough—yet outwardly trying

to face it down, as if nothing had happened—when the roguish grin of one of these young wits encountered me. There he stood, pointing me out with his dusky finger to the mob, and to a poor woman (I suppose his mother) in particular, till the tears for the exquisiteness of the fun (so he thought it) worked themselves out at the corners of his poor red eyes, red from many a previous weeping, and soot-inflamed, yet twinkling through all with such a joy, snatched out of desolation, that Hogarth —— but Hogarth has got him already (how could he miss him ?) in the March to Finchley, grinning at the pye-man——there he stood, as he stands in the picture, irremovable, as if the jest was to last for ever—with such a maximum of glee, and minimum of mischief, in his mirth—for the grin of a genuine sweep hath absolutely no malice in it—that I could have been content, if the honour of a gentleman might endure it, to have remained his butt and his mockery till midnight.

I am by theory obdurate to the seductiveness of what are called a fine set of teeth. Every pair of rosy lips (the ladies must pardon me) is a casket, presumably holding such jewels ; but, methinks, they should take leave to " air " them as frugally as possible. The fine lady, or fine gentleman, who show me their teeth, show me bones. Yet must I confess, that from the mouth of a true sweep a display (even to ostentation) of those white and shining ossifications, strikes me as an agreeable anomaly in manners, and an allowable piece of foppery. It is, as when

> A sable cloud
> Turns forth her silver lining on the night.

It is like some remnant of gentry not quite extinct ; a badge of better days ; a hint of nobility :—and, doubtless, under the obscuring darkness and double

night of their forlorn disguisement, oftentimes lurketh good blood, and gentle conditions, derived from lost ancestry, and a lapsed pedigree. The premature apprenticements of these tender victims give but too much encouragement, I fear, to clandestine, and almost infantile abductions; the seeds of civility and true courtesy, so often discernible in these young grafts (not otherwise to be accounted for) plainly hint at some forced adoptions; many noble Rachels mourning for their children, even in our days, countenance the fact; the tales of fairy-spiriting may shadow a lamentable verity, and the recovery of the young Montagu be but a solitary instance of good fortune, out of many irreparable and hopeless *defiliations*.

In one of the state-beds at Arundel Castle, a few years since—under a ducal canopy—(that seat of the Howards is an object of curiosity to visitors, chiefly for its beds, in which the late duke was especially a connoisseur)—encircled with curtains of delicatest crimson, with starry coronets inwoven—folded between a pair of sheets whiter and softer than the lap where Venus lulled Ascanius—was discovered by chance, after all methods of search had failed, at noon-day, fast asleep, a lost chimney-sweeper. The little creature, having somehow confounded his passage among the intricacies of those lordly chimneys, by some unknown aperture had alighted upon this magnificent chamber; and, tired with his tedious explorations, was unable to resist the delicious invitement to repose, which he there saw exhibited; so, creeping between the sheets very quietly, laid his black head upon the pillow, and slept like a young Howard.

Such is the account given to the visitors at the Castle.—But I cannot help seeming to perceive a confirmation of what I have just hinted at in this story. A high instinct was at work in the case, or I

am mistaken. Is it probable that a poor child of that description, with whatever weariness he might be visited, would have ventured, under such a penalty, as he would be taught to expect, to uncover the sheets of a Duke's bed, and deliberately to lay himself down between them, when the rug, or the carpet, presented an obvious couch, still far above his pretensions—is this probable, I would ask, if the great power of nature, which I contend for, had not been manifested within him, prompting to the adventure? Doubtless this young nobleman (for such my mind misgives me that he must be) was allured by some memory, not amounting to full consciousness, of his condition in infancy, when he was used to be lapt by his mother, or his nurse, in just such sheets as he there found, into which he was now but creeping back as into his proper *incunabula*, and resting-place.—By no other theory, than by this sentiment of a pre-existent state (as I may call it), can I explain a deed so venturous, and, indeed, upon any other system, so indecorous, in this tender, but unseasonable, sleeper.

My pleasant friend Jem White was so impressed with a belief of metamorphoses like this frequently taking place, that in some sort to reverse the wrongs of fortune in these poor changelings, he instituted an annual feast of chimney-sweepers, at which it was his pleasure to officiate as host and waiter. It was a solemn supper held in Smithfield, upon the yearly return of the fair of St Bartholomew. Cards were issued a week before to the master-sweeps in and about the metropolis, confining the invitation to their younger fry. Now and then an elderly stripling would get in among us, and be good-naturedly winked at; but our main body were infantry. One unfortunate wight, indeed, who, relying upon his dusky suit, had intruded himself into our party, but by tokens was providentially discovered in time to be

no chimney-sweeper (all is not soot which looks so), was quoited out of the presence with universal indignation, as not having on the wedding garment ; but in general the greatest harmony prevailed. The place chosen was a convenient spot among the pens, at the north side of the fair, not so far distant as to be impervious to the agreeable hubbub of that vanity; but remote enough not to be obvious to the interruption of every gaping spectator in it. The guests assembled about seven. In those little temporary parlours three tables were spread with napery, not so fine as substantial, and at every board a comely hostess presided with her pan of hissing sausages. The nostrils of the young rogues dilated at the savour. James White, as head waiter, had charge of the first table ; and myself, with our trusty companion Bigod, ordinarily ministered to the other two. There was clambering and jostling, you may be sure, who should get at the first table—for Rochester in his maddest days could not have done the humours of the scene with more spirit than my friend. After some general expression of thanks for the honour the company had done him, his inaugural ceremony was to clasp the greasy waist of old dame Ursula (the fattest of the three), that stood frying and fretting, half-blessing, half-cursing "the gentleman," and imprint upon her chaste lips a tender salute, whereat the universal host would set up a shout that tore the concave, while hundreds of grinning teeth startled the night with their brightness. O it was a pleasure to see the sable younkers lick in the unctuous meat, with *his* more unctuous sayings—how he would fit the tit bits to the puny mouths, reserving the lengthier links for the seniors—how he would intercept a morsel even in the jaws of some young desperado, declaring it "must to the pan again to be browned, for it was not fit for a gentleman's eating"—how he would recommend this

slice of white bread, or that piece of kissing-crust, to a tender juvenile, advising them all to have a care of cracking their teeth, which were their best patrimony, —how genteelly he would deal about the small ale, as if it were wine, naming the brewer, and protesting, if it were not good, he should lose their custom ; with a special recommendation to wipe the lip before drinking. Then we had our toasts—"The King,"—the "Cloth," —which, whether they understood or not, was equally diverting and flattering ;—and for a crowning sentiment, which never failed, "May the Brush supersede the Laurel." All these, and fifty other fancies, which were rather felt than comprehended by his guests, would he utter, standing upon tables, and prefacing every sentiment with a "Gentlemen, give me leave to propose so and so," which was a prodigious comfort to those young orphans ; every now and then stuffing into his mouth (for it did not do to be squeamish on these occasions) indiscriminate pieces of those reeking sausages, which pleased them mightily, and was the savouriest part, you may believe, of the entertainment.

> Golden lads and lasses must,
> As chimney-sweepers, come to dust—

James White is extinct, and with him these suppers have long ceased. He carried away with him half the fun of the world when he died—of my world at least. His old clients look for him among the pens ; and missing him, reproach the altered feast of St Bartholomew, and the glory of Smithfield departed for ever.

A COMPLAINT OF THE DECAY OF BEGGARS IN THE METROPOLIS

THE all-sweeping besom of societarian reformation—your only modern Alcides' club to rid the time of its abuses—is uplift with many-handed sway to extirpate the last fluttering tatters of the bugbear MENDICITY from the metropolis. Scrips, wallets, bags—staves, dogs, and crutches—the whole mendicant fraternity with all their baggage are fast posting out of the purlieus of this eleventh persecution. From the crowded crossing, from the corners of streets and turnings of alleys, the parting Genius of Beggary is "with sighing sent."

I do not approve of this wholesale going to work, this impertinent crusado of *bellum ad exterminationem*, proclaimed against a species. Much good might be sucked from these Beggars.

They were the oldest and the honourablest form

of pauperism. Their appeals were to our common nature ; less revolting to an ingenuous mind than to be a suppliant to the particular humours or caprice of any fellow-creature, or set of fellow-creatures, parochial or societarian. Theirs were the only rates uninvidious in the levy, ungrudged in the assessment.

There was a dignity springing from the very depth of their desolation ; as to be naked is to be so much nearer to the being a man, than to go in livery.

The greatest spirits have felt this in their reverses; and when Dionysius from king turned schoolmaster, do we feel any thing towards him but contempt? Could Vandyke have made a picture of him, swaying a ferula for a sceptre, which would have affected our minds with the same heroic pity, the same compassionate admiration, with which we regard his Belisarius begging for an *obolum?* Would the moral have been more graceful, more pathetic ?

The Blind Beggar in the legend—the father of pretty Bessy—whose story doggrel rhymes and alehouse signs cannot so degrade or attenuate, but that some sparks of a lustrous spirit will shine through the disguisements—this noble Earl of Cornwall (as indeed he was) and memorable sport of fortune, fleeing from the unjust sentence of his liege lord, stript of all, and seated on the flowering green or Bethnal, with his more fresh and springing daughter by his side, illumining his rags and his beggary—would the child and parent have cut a better figure, doing the honours of a counter, or expiating their fallen condition upon the three-foot eminence of some sempstering shop-board ?

In tale or history your Beggar is ever the just antipode to your King. The poets and romancical writers (as dear Margaret Newcastle would call them) when they would most sharply and feelingly paint a reverse of fortune, never stop till they have brought

down their hero in good earnest to rags and the wallet. The depth of the descent illustrates the height he falls from. There is no medium which can be presented to the imagination without offence. There is no breaking the fall. Lear, thrown from his palace, must divest him of his garments, till he answer "mere nature;" and Cresseid, fallen from a prince's love, must extend her pale arms, pale with other whiteness than of beauty, supplicating lazar alms with bell and clapdish.

The Lucian wits knew this very well; and, with a converse policy, when they would express scorn of greatness without the pity, they show us an Alexander in the shades cobbling shoes, or a Semiramis getting up foul linen.

How would it sound in song, that a great monarch had declined his affections upon the daughter of a baker! yet do we feel the imagination at all violated when we read the "true ballad," where King Cophetua wooes the beggar maid?

Pauperism, pauper, poor man, are expressions of pity, but pity alloyed with contempt. No one properly contemns a beggar. Poverty is a comparative thing, and each degree of it is mocked by its "neighbour grice." Its poor rents and comings-in are soon summed up and told. Its pretences to property are almost ludicrous. Its pitiful attempts to save excite a smile. Every scornful companion can weigh his trifle-bigger purse against it. Poor man reproaches poor man in the streets with impolitic mention of his condition, his own being a shade better, while the rich pass by and jeer at both. No rascally comparative insults a Beggar, or thinks of weighing purses with him. He is not in the scale of comparison. He is not under the measure of property. He confessedly hath none, any more than a dog or a sheep. No one twitteth him with osten-

"Jostle with him for the wall."

tation above his means. No one accuses him of pride, or upbraideth him with mock humility. None jostle with him for the wall, or pick quarrels for precedency. No wealthy neighbour seeketh to eject him from his tenement. No man sues him. No man goes to law with him. If I were not the independent gentleman that I am, rather than I would be a retainer to the great, a led captain, or a poor

relation, I would choose, out of the delicacy and true greatness of my mind, to be a Beggar.

Rags, which are the reproach of poverty, are the Beggar's robes, and graceful *insignia* of his profession, his tenure, his full dress, the suit in which he is expected to show himself in public. He is never out of the fashion, or limpeth awkwardly behind it. He is not required to put on court mourning. He weareth all colours, fearing none. His costume hath undergone less change than the Quaker's. He is the only man in the universe who is not obliged to study appearances. The ups and downs of the world concern him no longer. He alone continueth in one stay. The price of stock or land affecteth him not. The fluctuations of agricultural or commercial prosperity touch him not, or at worst but change his customers. He is not expected to become bail or surety for any one. No man troubleth him with questioning his religion or politics. He is the only free man in the universe.

The Mendicants of this great city were so many of her sights, her lions. I can no more spare them than I could the Cries of London. No corner of a street is complete without them. They are as indispensable as the Ballad Singer; and in their picturesque attire as ornamental as the Signs of old London. They were the standing morals, emblems, mementos, dial-mottos, the spital sermons, the books for children, the salutary checks and pauses to the high and rushing tide of greasy citizenry—

> ———Look
> Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there.

Above all, those old blind Tobits that used to line the wall of Lincoln's Inn Garden, before modern fastidiousness had expelled them, casting up their ruined orbs to catch a ray of pity, and (if possible) of

light, with their faithful Dog Guide at their feet,—whither are they fled? or into what corners, blind as themselves, have they been driven, out of the wholesome air and sun-warmth? immersed between four walls, in what withering poor-house do they endure the penalty of double darkness, where the chink of the dropt half-penny no more consoles their forlorn bereavement, far from the sound of the cheerful and hope-stirring tread of the passenger? Where hang their useless staves? and who will farm their dogs?—Have the overseers of St L—— caused them to be shot? or were they tied up in sacks, and dropt into the Thames, at the suggestion of B—— the mild Rector of ——?

Well fare the soul of unfastidious Vincent Bourne, most classical, and at the same time, most English, of the Latinists!—who has treated of this human and quadrupedal alliance, this dog and man friendship, in the sweetest of his poems, the *Epitaphium in Canem*, or, *Dog's Epitaph*. Reader, peruse it; and say, if customary sights, which could call up such gentle poetry as this, were of a nature to do more harm or good to the moral sense of the passengers through the daily thoroughfares of a vast and busy metropolis.

Pauperis hic Iri requiesco Lyciscus, herilis,
Dum vixi, tutela vigil columenque senectæ,
Dux cæco fidus: nec, me ducente, solebat,
Prætenso hinc atque hinc baculo, per iniqua locorum
Incertam explorare viam; sed fila secutus,
Quæ dubios regerent passûs, vestigia tuta
Fixit inoffenso gressu; gelidumque sedile
In nudo nactus saxo, quà prætereuntium
Unda frequens confluxit, ibi miserisque tenebras
Lamentis, noctemque oculis ploravit obortam.
Ploravit nec frustra; obolum dedit alter et alter,
Queis corda et mentem indiderat natura benignam.
Ad latus interea jacui sopitus herile,
Vel mediis vigil in somnis; ad herilia jussa
Auresque atque animum arrectus, seu frustula amicè

Porrexit sociasque dapes, seu longa diei
Tædia perpessus, reditum sub nocte parabat.
  Hi mores, hæc vita fuit, dum fata sinebant,
Dum neque languebam morbis, nec inerte senectâ;
Quæ tandem obrepsit, veterique satellite cæcum
Orbavit dominum: prisci sed gratia facti
Ne tota intereat, longos deleta per annos,
Exiguum hunc Irus tumulum de cespite fecit,
Etsi inopis, non ingratæ, munuscula dextræ;
Carmine signavitque brevi, dominumque canemque
Quod memoret, fidumque canem dominumque benignum.

Poor Irus' faithful wolf-dog here I lie,
That wont to tend my old blind master's steps,
His guide and guard: nor, while my service lasted,
Had he occasion for that staff, with which
He now goes picking out his path in fear
Over the highways and crossings; but would plant,
Safe in the conduct of my friendly string,
A firm foot forward still, till he hath reach'd
His poor seat on some stone, nigh where the tide
Of passers by in thickest confluence flow'd:
To whom with loud and passionate laments
From morn to eve his dark estate he wail'd.
Nor wail'd to all in vain: some here and there,
The well-disposed and good, their pennies gave.
I meantime at his feet obsequious slept;
Not all-asleep in sleep, but heart and ear
Prick'd up at his least motion; to receive
At his kind hand my customary crumbs,
And common portion in his feast of scraps;
Or when night warn'd us homeward, tired and spent
With our long day and tedious beggary.
  These were my manners, this my way of life,
Till age and slow disease me overtook,
And sever'd from my sightless master's side.
But lest the grace of so good deeds should die,
Through tract of years in mute oblivion lost,
This slender tomb of turf hath Irus reared,
Cheap monument of no ungrudging hand,
And with short verse inscribed it, to attest,
In long and lasting union to attest,
The virtues of the Beggar and his Dog.

These dim eyes have in vain explored for some months past a well-known figure, or part of the figure, of a man, who used to glide his comely upper half over the pavements of London, wheeling along

with most ingenious celerity upon a machine of wood ; a spectacle to natives, to foreigners, and to children. He was of robust make, with a florid sailor-like complexion, and his head was bare to the storm and sunshine. He was a natural curiosity, a speculation to the scientific, a prodigy to the simple. The infant would stare at the mighty man brought down to his own level. The common cripple would despise his own pusillanimity, viewing the hale stoutness, and hearty heart, of this half-limbed giant. Few but must have noticed him ; for the accident, which brought him low, took place during the riots of 1780, and he has been a groundling so long. He seemed earth-born, an Antæus, and to suck in fresh vigour from the soil which he neighboured. He was a grand fragment ; as good as an Elgin marble. The nature, which should have recruited his reft legs and thighs, was not lost, but only retired into his upper parts, and he was half a Hercules. I heard a tremendous voice thundering and growling, as before an earthquake, and casting down my eyes, it was this mandrake reviling a steed that had started at his portentous appearance. He seemed to want but his just stature to have rent the offending quadruped in shivers. He was as the man-part of a Centaur, from which the horse-half had been cloven in some dire Lapithan controversy. He moved on, as if he could have made shift with yet half of the body-portion which was left him. The *os sublime* was not wanting; and he threw out yet a jolly countenance upon the heavens. Forty-and-two years had he driven this out of door trade, and now that his hair is grizzled in the service, but his good spirits no way impaired, because he is not content to exchange his free air and exercise for the restraints of a poor-house, he is expiating his contumacy in one of those houses (ironically christened) of Correction.

Was a daily spectacle like this to be deemed a nuisance, which called for legal interference to remove? or not rather a salutary and a touching object, to the passers-by in a great city? Among her shows, her museums, and supplies for ever-gaping curiosity (and what else but an accumulation of sights —endless sights—*is* a great city; or for what else is it desirable?) was there not room for one *Lusus* (not *Naturæ*, indeed, but) *Accidentium?* What if in forty-and-two years' going about, the man had scraped together enough to give a portion to his child (as the rumour ran) of a few hundreds—whom had he injured?—whom had he imposed upon? The contributors had enjoyed their *sight* for their pennies. What if after being exposed all day to the heats, the rains, and the frosts of heaven—shuffling his ungainly trunk along in an elaborate and painful motion—he was enabled to retire at night to enjoy himself at a club of his fellow cripples over a dish of hot meat and vegetables, as the charge was gravely brought against him by a clergyman deposing before a House of Commons' Committee—was *this*, or was his truly paternal consideration, which (if a fact) deserved a statue rather than a whipping-post, and is inconsistent at least with the exaggeration of nocturnal orgies which he has been slandered with—a reason that he should be deprived of his chosen, harmless, nay edifying, way of life, and be committed in hoary age for a sturdy vagabond?—

There was a Yorick once, whom it would not have shamed to have sate down at the cripples' feast, and to have thrown in his benediction, ay, and his mite too, for a companionable symbol. "Age, thou hast lost thy breed."—

Half of these stories about the prodigious fortunes made by begging are (I verily believe) misers' calumnies. One was much talked of in the public papers

The infant would stare at the mighty man brought down to his own level.

some time since, and the usual charitable inferences deduced. A clerk in the Bank was surprised with the announcement of a five hundred pound legacy left him by a person whose name he was a stranger to. It seems that in his daily morning walks from Peckham (or some village thereabouts) where he lived, to his office, it had been his practice for the last twenty years to drop his halfpenny duly into the hat of some blind Bartimeus, that sate begging alms by the way-side in the Borough. The good old beggar recognised his daily benefactor by the voice only; and, when he died, left all the amassings of his alms (that had been half a century perhaps in the accumulating) to his old Bank friend. Was this a story to purse up people's hearts, and pennies, against giving an alms to the blind?—or not rather a beautiful moral of well-directed charity on the one part, and noble gratitude upon the other?

I sometimes wish I had been that Bank clerk.

I seem to remember a poor old grateful kind of creature, blinking, and looking up with his no eyes in the sun—

Is it possible I could have steeled my purse against him?

Perhaps I had no small change.

Reader, do not be frightened at the hard words, imposition, imposture—*give, and ask no questions.* Cast thy bread upon the waters. Some have unawares (like this Bank clerk) entertained angels.

Shut not thy purse-strings always against painted distress. Act a charity sometimes. When a poor creature (outwardly and visibly such) comes before thee, do not stay to inquire whether the "seven small children," in whose name he implores thy assistance, have a veritable existence. Rake not into the bowels of unwelcome truth, to save a halfpenny. It is good to believe him. If he be not all that he

pretendeth, *give*, and under a personate father of a family, think (if thou pleasest) that thou hast relieved an indigent bachelor. When they come with their counterfeit looks, and mumping tones, think them players. You pay your money to see a comedian feign these things, which, concerning these poor people, thou canst not certainly tell whether they are feigned or not.

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

MANKIND, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally the Cook's holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swine-herd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care

of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as younkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian makeshift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labour of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odour assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from ?—not from the burnt cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young fire-brand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted—*crackling !* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his

fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and, surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hailstones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you, but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?"

"O, father, the pig, the pig, do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out "Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste—O Lord," —with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled in every joint while he grasped the

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring?"

abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavour, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious)

both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbours would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it, and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given,—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision; and, when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a

few days his Lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string, or spit, came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious arts, make their way among mankind.——

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed, that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favour of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*, I will maintain it to be the most delicate—*princeps obsoniorum*.

I speak not of your grown porkers—things between pig and pork—those hobbydehoys—but a young and tender suckling—under a moon old—guiltless as yet of the sty—with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*, the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest—his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble, and a grumble—the mild forerunner or *præludium*, of a grunt.

'A sage arose ··· who made a discovery'

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed or boiled—but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat—but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food——the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result, or common substance.

Behold him, while he is doing—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth, than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string!—Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age, he hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—shooting stars—

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth!—wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal—wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation—from these sins he is happily snatched away—

> Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
> Death came with timely care—

his memory is odoriferous—no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon—no coal-heaver bolteth him in reeking sausages—he hath a fair

sepulchre in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure—and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of Sapors. Pine-apple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent—a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause—too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her—like lovers' kisses, she biteth—she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish—but she stoppeth at the palate—she meddleth not with the appetite—and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton chop.

Pig—let me speak his praise—is no less provocative of the appetite, than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwisted, and not to be unravelled without hazard, he is—good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbours' fare.

I am one of those, who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. "Presents," I often say, "endear Absents." Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens (those "tame villatic fowl"), capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be

put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give every thing." I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavours, to extra-domiciliate, or send out of the house, slightingly, (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what) a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate—It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a grey-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt at this time of day that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, school-boy like, I made him a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger, that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake—and what should I say to her the next time I saw her—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present—and the odour of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last—and I blamed my impertinent spirit of

alms-giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness, and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old grey impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipt to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to enquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto—

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, "Whether, supposing that the flavour of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?" I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crums, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But, banish, dear Mrs Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are—but consider, he is a weakling —a flower.

A BACHELOR'S COMPLAINT OF THE BEHAVIOUR OF MARRIED PEOPLE

AS a single man, I have spent a good deal of my time in noting down the infirmities of Married People, to console myself for those superior pleasures, which they tell me I have lost by remaining as I am.

I cannot say that the quarrels of men and their wives ever made any great impression upon me, or had much tendency to strengthen me in those anti-social resolutions, which I took up long ago upon more substantial considerations. What oftenest offends me at the houses of married persons where I visit, is an error of quite a different description ;—it is that they are too loving.

Not too loving neither : that does not explain my meaning. Besides, why should that offend me ? The very act of separating themselves from the rest of the world, to have the fuller enjoyment of each other's society, implies that they prefer one another to all the world.

But what I complain of is, that they carry this preference so undisguisedly, they perk it up in the faces of us single people so shamelessly, you cannot be in their company a moment without being made to feel, by some indirect hint or open avowal, that *you* are not the object of this preference. Now there are some things which give no offence, while implied or taken for granted merely; but expressed, there is much offence in them. If a man were to accost the first homely-featured or plain-dressed young woman of his acquaintance, and tell her bluntly, that she was not handsome or rich enough for him, and he could not marry her, he would deserve to be kicked for his ill manners; yet no less is implied in the fact, that having access and opportunity of putting the question to her, he has never yet thought fit to do it. The young woman understands this as clearly as if it were put into words; but no reasonable young woman would think of making this the ground of a quarrel. Just as little right have a married couple to tell me by speeches, and looks that are scarce less plain than speeches, that I am not the happy man,—the lady's choice. It is enough that I know I am not: I do not want this perpetual reminding.

The display of superior knowledge or riches may be made sufficiently mortifying; but these admit of a palliative. The knowledge which is brought out to insult me, may accidentally improve me; and in the rich man's houses and pictures,—his parks and gardens, I have a temporary usufruct at least. But the display of married happiness has none of these palliatives: it is throughout pure, unrecompensed, unqualified insult.

Marriage by its best title is a monopoly, and not of the least invidious sort. It is the cunning of most possessors of any exclusive privilege to keep their advantage as much out of sight as possible, that their

less favoured neighbours, seeing little of the benefit, may the less be disposed to question the right. But these married monopolists thrust the most obnoxious part of their patent into our faces.

Nothing is to me more distasteful than that entire complacency and satisfaction which beam in the countenances of a new-married couple,—in that of the lady particularly: it tells you, that her lot is disposed of in this world; that *you* can have no hopes of her. It is true, I have none; nor wishes either, perhaps; but this is one of those truths which ought, as I said before, to be taken for granted, not expressed.

The excessive airs which those people give themselves, founded on the ignorance of us unmarried people, would be more offensive if they were less irrational. We will allow them to understand the mysteries belonging to their own craft better than we who have not had the happiness to be made free of the company: but their arrogance is not content within these limits. If a single person presume to offer his opinion in their presence, though upon the most indifferent subject, he is immediately silenced as an incompetent person. Nay, a young married lady of my acquaintance who, the best of the jest was, had not changed her condition above a fortnight before, in a question on which I had the misfortune to differ from her, respecting the properest mode of breeding oysters for the London market, had the assurance to ask with a sneer, how such an old Bachelor as I could pretend to know any thing about such matters.

But what I have spoken of hitherto is nothing to the airs which these creatures give themselves when they come, as they generally do, to have children. When I consider how little of a rarity children are,—that every street and blind alley swarms with them,—that the poorest people commonly have them in most

"Expected to bring our tribute and homage."

abundance,—that there are few marriages that are not blest with at least one of these bargains,—how often they turn out ill, and defeat the fond hopes of their parents, taking to vicious courses, which end in poverty, disgrace, the gallows, &c.—I cannot for my life tell what cause for pride there can possibly be in having them. If they were young phœnixes, indeed, that were born but one in a year, there might be a pretext. But when they are so common——

I do not advert to the insolent merit which they assume with their husbands on these occasions. Let them look to that. But why *we*, who are not their natural-born subjects, should be expected to bring our spices, myrrh, and incense,—our tribute and homage of admiration,—I do not see.

"Like as the arrows in the hand of a giant, even

so are the young children : " so says the excellent office in our Prayer-book appointed for the churching of women. " Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them :" So say I ; but then don't let him discharge his quiver upon us that are weaponless ; let them be arrows, but not to gall and stick us. I have generally observed that these arrows are double-headed : they have two forks, to be sure to hit with one or the other. As for instance, where you come into a house which is full of children, if you happen to take no notice of them (you are thinking of something else, perhaps, and turn a deaf ear to their innocent caresses), you are set down as untractable, morose, a hater of children. On the other hand, if you find them more than usually engaging,—if you are taken with their pretty manners, and set about in earnest to romp and play with them, some pretext or other is sure to be found for sending them out of the room : they are too noisy or boisterous, or Mr —— does not like children. With one or other of these forks the arrow is sure to hit you.

I could forgive their jealousy, and dispense with toying with their brats, if it gives them any pain; but I think it unreasonable to be called upon to *love* them, where I see no occasion,—to love a whole family, perhaps, eight, nine, or ten, indiscriminately —to love all the pretty dears, because children are so engaging.

I know there is a proverb, "Love me, love my dog : " that is not always so very practicable, particularly if the dog be set upon you to tease you or snap at you in sport. But a dog, or a lesser thing,— any inanimate substance, as a keep-sake, a watch or a ring, a tree, or the place where we last parted when my friend went away upon a long absence, I can make shift to love, because I love him, and any thing that reminds me of him ; provided it be in its nature

indifferent, and apt to receive whatever hue fancy can give it. But children have a real character, and an essential being of themselves: they are amiable or unamiable *per se*; I must love or hate them as I see cause for either in their qualities. A child's nature is too serious a thing to admit of its being regarded as a mere appendage to another being, and to be loved or hated accordingly: they stand with me upon their own stock, as much as men and women do. O! but you will say, sure it is an attractive age,—there is something in the tender years of infancy that of itself charms us. That is the very reason why I am more nice about them. I know that a sweet child is the sweetest thing in nature, not even excepting the delicate creatures which bear them; but the prettier the kind of a thing is, the more desirable it is that it should be pretty of its kind. One daisy differs not much from another in glory; but a violet should look and smell the daintiest.—I was always rather squeamish in my women and children.

But this is not the worst: one must be admitted into their familiarity at least, before they can complain of inattention. It implies visits, and some kind of intercourse. But if the husband be a man with whom you have lived on a friendly footing before marriage,—if you did not come in on the wife's side,—if you did not sneak into the house in her train, but were an old friend in fast habits of intimacy before their courtship was so much as thought on,—look about you—your tenure is precarious—before a twelvemonth shall roll over your head, you shall find your old friend gradually grow cool and altered towards you, and at last seek opportunities of breaking with you. I have scarce a married friend of my acquaintance, upon whose firm faith I can rely, whose friendship did not commence *after the period of his marriage*. With some limitations they can endure

that: but that the good man should have dared to enter into a solemn league of friendship in which they were not consulted, though it happened before they knew him,—before they that are now man and wife ever met,—this is intolerable to them. Every long friendship, every old authentic intimacy, must be brought into their office to be new stamped with their currency, as a sovereign Prince calls in the good old money that was coined in some reign before he was born or thought of, to be new marked and minted with the stamp of his authority, before he will let it pass current in the world. You may guess what luck generally befalls such a rusty piece of metal as I am in these *new mintings*.

Innumerable are the ways which they take to insult and worm you out of their husband's confidence. Laughing at all you say with a kind of wonder, as if you were a queer kind of fellow that said good things, *but an oddity*, is one of the ways;—they have a particular kind of stare for the purpose;—till at last the husband, who used to defer to your judgment, and would pass over some excrescences of understanding and manner for the sake of a general vein of observation (not quite vulgar) which he perceived in you, begins to suspect whether you are not altogether a humorist,—a fellow well enough to have consorted with in his bachelor days, but not quite so proper to be introduced to ladies. This may be called the staring way; and is that which has oftenest been put in practice against me.

Then there is the exaggerating way, or the way of irony: that is, where they find you an object of especial regard with their husband, who is not so easily to be shaken from the lasting attachment founded on esteem which he has conceived towards you; by never-qualified exaggerations to cry up all that you say or do, till the good man, who understands

well enough that it is all done in compliment to him, grows weary of the debt of gratitude which is due to so much candour, and by relaxing a little on his part, and taking down a peg or two in his enthusiasm, sinks at length to the kindly level of moderate esteem, —that "decent affection and complacent kindness" towards you, where she herself can join in sympathy with him without much stretch and violence to her sincerity.

Another way (for the ways they have to accomplish so desirable a purpose are infinite) is, with a kind of innocent simplicity, continually to mistake what it was which first made their husband fond of you. If an esteem for something excellent in your moral character was that which riveted the chain which she is to break, upon any imaginary discovery of a want of poignancy in your conversation, she will cry, "I thought, my dear, you described your friend, Mr —— as a great wit." If, on the other hand, it was for some supposed charm in your conversation that he first grew to like you, and was content for this to overlook some trifling irregularities in your moral deportment, upon the first notice of any of these she as readily exclaims, "This, my dear, is your good Mr ——." One good lady whom I took the liberty of expostulating with for not showing me quite so much respect as I thought due to her husband's old friend, had the candour to confess to me that she had often heard Mr —— speak of me before marriage, and that she had conceived a great desire to be acquainted with me, but that the sight of me had very much disappointed her expectations; for from her husband's representations of me, she had formed a notion that she was to see a fine, tall, officer-like looking man, (I use her very words); the very reverse of which proved to be the truth. This was candid; and I had the civility not to ask her in

return, how she came to pitch upon a standard of personal accomplishments for her husband's friends which differed so much from his own; for my friend's dimensions as near as possible approximate to mine; he standing five feet five in his shoes, in which I have the advantage of him by about half an inch; and he no more than myself exhibiting any indications of a martial character in his air or countenance.

These are some of the mortifications which I have encountered in the absurd attempt to visit at their houses. To enumerate them all would be a vain endeavour: I shall therefore just glance at the very common impropriety of which married ladies are guilty,—of treating us as if we were their husbands, and *vice versâ*. I mean, when they use us with familiarity, and their husbands with ceremony. *Testacea*, for instance, kept me the other night two or three hours beyond my usual time of supping, while she was fretting because Mr —— did not come home, till the oysters were all spoiled, rather than she would be guilty of the impoliteness of touching one in his absence. This was reversing the point of good manners: for ceremony is an invention to take off the uneasy feeling which we derive from knowing ourselves to be less the object of love and esteem with a fellow-creature than some other person is. It endeavours to make up, by superior attentions in little points, for that invidious preference which it is forced to deny in the greater. Had *Testacea* kept the oysters back for me, and withstood her husband's importunities to go to supper, she would have acted according to the strict rules of propriety. I know no ceremony that ladies are bound to observe to their husbands, beyond the point of a modest behaviour and decorum: therefore I must protest against the vicarious gluttony of *Cerasia*, who at her own table sent away a dish of

Morellas, which I was applying to with great good will, to her husband at the other end of the table, and recommended a plate of less extraordinary gooseberries to my unwedded palate in their stead. Neither can I excuse the wanton affront of——

But I am weary of stringing up all my married acquaintance by Roman denominations. Let them amend and change their manners, or I promise to record the full-length English of their names, to the terror of all such desperate offenders in future.

ON SOME OF THE OLD ACTORS

THE casual sight of an old Play Bill, which I picked up the other day—I know not by what chance it was preserved so long—tempts me to call to mind a few of the Players, who make the principal figure in it. It presents the cast of parts in the Twelfth Night, at the old Drury-lane Theatre two-and-thirty years ago. There is something very touching in these old remembrances. They make us think how we *once* used to read a Play Bill—not, as now peradventure, singling out a favourite performer, and casting a negligent eye over the rest; but spelling out every name, down to the very mutes and servants of the scene;—when it was a matter of no small moment to us whether Whitfield, or Packer,

took the part of Fabian; when Benson, and Burton, and Phillimore—names of small account—had an importance, beyond what we can be content to attribute now to the time's best actors.—"Orsino, by Mr Barrymore."—What a full Shakspearian sound it carries! how fresh to memory arise the image, and the manner, of the gentle actor!

Those who have only seen Mrs Jordan within the last ten or fifteen years, can have no adequate notion of her performance of such parts as Ophelia; Helena, in All's Well that Ends Well; and Viola in this play. Her voice had latterly acquired a coarseness, which suited well enough with her Nells and Hoydens, but in those days it sank, with her steady melting eye, into the heart. Her joyous parts—in which her memory now chiefly lives—in her youth were outdone by her plaintive ones. There is no giving an account how she delivered the disguised story of her love for Orsino. It was no set speech, that she had foreseen, so as to weave it into an harmonious period, line necessarily following line, to make up the music—yet I have heard it so spoken, or rather *read*, not without its grace and beauty—but, when she had declared her sister's history to be a "blank," and that she "never told her love," there was a pause, as if the story had ended—and then the image of the "worm in the bud" came up as a new suggestion—and the heightened image of "Patience" still followed after that, as by some growing (and not mechanical) process, thought springing up after thought, I would almost say, as they were watered by her tears. So in those fine lines—

> Write loyal cantos of contemned love—
> Hollow your name to the reverberate hills—

there was no preparation made in the foregoing image for that which was to follow. She used no rhetoric

in her passion; or it was nature's own rhetoric, most legitimate then, when it seemed altogether without rule or law.

Mrs Powel (now Mrs Renard), then in the pride of her beauty, made an admirable Olivia. She was particularly excellent in her unbending scenes in conversation with the Clown. I have seen some Olivias —and those very sensible actresses too—who in these interlocutions have seemed to set their wits at the jester, and to vie conceits with him in downright emulation. But she used him for her sport, like what he was, to trifle a leisure sentence or two with, and then to be dismissed, and she to be the Great Lady still. She touched the imperious fantastic humour of the character with nicety. Her fine spacious person filled the scene.

The part of Malvolio has in my judgment been so often misunderstood, and the *general merits* of the actor, who then played it, so unduly appreciated, that I shall hope for pardon, if I am a little prolix upon these points.

Of all the actors who flourished in my time—a melancholy phrase if taken aright, reader—Bensley had most of the swell of soul, was greatest in the delivery of heroic conceptions, the emotions consequent upon the presentment of a great idea to the fancy. He had the true poetical enthusiasm—the rarest faculty among players. None that I remember possessed even a portion of that fine madness which he threw out in Hotspur's famous rant about glory, or the transports of the Venetian incendiary at the vision of the fired city. His voice had the dissonance, and at times the inspiriting effect of the trumpet. His gait was uncouth and stiff, but no way embarrassed by affectation; and the thorough-bred gentleman was uppermost in every movement. He seized the moment of passion with the greatest truth; like a faithful

clock, never striking before the time; never anticipating or leading you to anticipate. He was totally destitute of trick and artifice. He seemed come upon the stage to do the poet's message simply, and he did it with as genuine fidelity as the nuncios in Homer deliver the errands of the gods. He let the passion or the sentiment do its own work without prop or bolstering. He would have scorned to mountebank it; and betrayed none of that *cleverness* which is the bane of serious acting. For this reason, his Iago was the only endurable one which I remember to have seen. No spectator from his action could divine more of his artifice than Othello was supposed to do. His confessions in soliloquy alone put you in possession of the mystery. There were no by-intimations to make the audience fancy their own discernment so much greater than that of the Moor—who commonly stands like a great helpless mark set up for mine Ancient, and a quantity of barren spectators, to shoot their bolts at. The Iago of Bensley did not go to work so grossly. There was a triumphant tone about the character, natural to a general consciousness of power; but none of that petty vanity which chuckles and cannot contain itself upon any little successful stroke of its knavery—as is common with your small villains, and green probationers in mischief. It did not clap or crow before its time. It was not a man setting his wits at a child, and winking all the while at other children who are mightily pleased at being let into the secret; but a consummate villain entrapping a noble nature into toils, against which no discernment was available, where the manner was as fathomless as the purpose seemed dark, and without motive. The part of Malvolio, in the Twefth Night, was performed by Bensley, with a richness and a dignity, of which (to judge from some recent castings of that character) the very tradition must be worn out from

the stage. No manager in those days would have dreamed of giving it to Mr Baddeley, or Mr Parsons; when Bensley was occasionally absent from the theatre, John Kemble thought it no derogation to succeed to the part. Malvolio is not essentially ludicrous. He becomes comic but by accident. He is cold, austere, repelling; but dignified, consistent, and, for what appears, rather of an over-stretched morality. Maria describes him as a sort of Puritan; and he might have worn his gold chain with honour in one of our old round-head families, in the service of a Lambert, or a Lady Fairfax. But his morality and his manners are misplaced in Illyria. He is opposed to the proper *levities* of the piece, and falls in the unequal contest. Still his pride, or his gravity, (call it which you will) is inherent, and native to the man, not mock or affected, which latter only are the fit objects to excite laughter. His quality is at the best unlovely, but neither buffoon nor contemptible. His bearing is lofty, a little above his station, but probably not much above his deserts. We see no reason why he should not have been brave, honourable, accomplished. His careless committal of the ring to the ground (which he was commissioned to restore to Cesario), bespeaks a generosity of birth and feeling. His dialect on all occasions is that of a gentleman, and a man of education. We must not confound him with the eternal old, low steward of comedy. He is master of the household to a great Princess; a dignity probably conferred upon him for other respects than age or length of service. Olivia, at the first indication of his supposed madness, declares that she "would not have him miscarry for half of her dowry." Does this look as if the character was meant to appear little or insignificant? Once, indeed, she accuses him to his face—of what?—of being "sick of self-love,"—but with a gentleness and considerateness which could not have

been, if she had not thought that this particular infirmity shaded some virtues. His rebuke to the knight, and his sottish revellers, is sensible and spirited; and when we take into consideration the unprotected condition of his mistress, and the strict regard with which her state of real or dissembled mourning would draw the eyes of the world upon her house-affairs, Malvolio might feel the honour of the family in some sort in his keeping; as it appears not that Olivia had any more brothers, or kinsmen, to look to it—for Sir Toby had dropped all such nice respects at the buttery hatch. That Malvolio was meant to be represented as possessing estimable qualities, the expression of the Duke in his anxiety to have him reconciled, almost infers. "Pursue him, and entreat him to a peace." Even in his abused state of chains and darkness, a sort of greatness seems never to desert him. He argues highly and well with the supposed Sir Topas, and philosophises gallantly upon his straw.[1] There must have been some shadow of worth about the man; he must have been something more than a mere vapour—a thing of straw, or Jack in office—before Fabian and Maria could have ventured sending him upon a courting-errand to Olivia. There was some consonancy (as he would say) in the undertaking, or the jest would have been too bold even for that house of misrule.

Bensley, accordingly, threw over the part an air of Spanish loftiness. He looked, spake, and moved like an old Castilian. He was starch, spruce, opinionated, but his superstructure of pride seemed bottomed upon

[1] *Clown.* What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?

Mal. That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird.

Clown. What thinkest thou of his opinion?

Mal. I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve of his opinion.

a sense of worth. There was something in it beyond the coxcomb. It was big and swelling, but you could not be sure that it was hollow. You might wish to see it taken down, but you felt that it was upon an elevation. He was magnificent from the outset; but when the decent sobrieties of the character began to give way, and the poison of self-love, in his conceit of the Countess's affection, gradually to work, you would have thought that the hero of La Mancha in person stood before you. How he went smiling to himself! with what ineffable carelessness would he twirl his gold chain! what a dream it was! you were infected with the illusion, and did not wish that it should be removed! you had no room for laughter! if an unseasonable reflection of morality obtruded itself, it was a deep sense of the pitiable infirmity of man's nature, that can lay him open to such frenzies —but in truth you rather admired than pitied the lunacy while it lasted—you felt that an hour of such mistake was worth an age with the eyes open. Who would not wish to live but for a day in the conceit of such a lady's love as Olivia? Why, the Duke would have given his principality but for a quarter of a minute, sleeping or waking, to have been so deluded. The man seemed to tread upon air, to taste manna, to walk with his head in the clouds, to mate Hyperion. O! shake not the castles of his pride—endure yet for a season bright moments of confidence—"stand still ye watches of the element," that Malvolio may be still in fancy fair Olivia's lord—but fate and retribution say no—I hear the mischievous titter of Maria—the witty taunts of Sir Toby—the still more insupportable triumph of the foolish knight—the counterfeit Sir Topas is unmasked—and "thus the whirligig of time," as the true clown hath it, "brings in his revenges." I confess that I never saw the catastrophe of this character, while Bensley played it, without a

"Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Sir Toby Belch."

kind of tragic interest. There was good foolery too. Few now remember Dodd. What an Aguecheek the stage lost in him! Lovegrove, who came nearest to the old actors, revived the character some few seasons ago, and made it sufficiently grotesque; but Dodd was *it* as it came out of nature's hands. It might be said to remain *in puris naturalibus.* In expressing slowness of apprehension this actor surpassed all others. You could see the first dawn of an idea stealing slowly over his countenance, climbing up by little and little, with a painful process, till it cleared

up at last to the fulness of a twilight conception—its highest meridian. He seemed to keep back his intellect, as some have had the power to retard their pulsation. The balloon takes less time in filling, than it took to cover the expansion of his broad moony face over all its quarters with expression. A glimmer of understanding would appear in a corner of his eye, and for lack of fuel go out again. A part of his forehead would catch a little intelligence, and be a long time in communicating it to the remainder.

I am ill at dates, but I think it is now better than five and twenty years ago that walking in the gardens of Gray's Inn—they were then far finer than they are now—the accursed Verulam Buildings had not encroached upon all the east side of them, cutting out delicate green crankles, and shouldering away one of two of the stately alcoves of the terrace—the survivor stands gaping and relationless as if it remembered its brother—they are still the best gardens of any of the Inns of Court, my beloved Temple not forgotten—have the gravest character, their aspect being altogether reverend and law breathing—Bacon has left the impress of his foot upon their gravel walks——taking my afternoon solace on a summer day upon the aforesaid terrace, a comely sad personage came towards me, whom, from his grave air and deportment, I judged to be one of the old Benchers of the Inn. He had a serious thoughtful forehead, and seemed to be in meditations of mortality. As I have an instinctive awe of old Benchers, I was passing him with that sort of subindicative token of respect which one is apt to demonstrate towards a venerable stranger, and which rather denotes an inclination to greet him, than any positive motion of the body to that effect—a species of humility and will-worship which I observe, nine times out of ten, rather puzzles than pleases the person it is offered to—when the face turning full

upon me strangely identified itself with that of Dodd. Upon close inspection I was not mistaken. But could this sad thoughtful countenance be the same vacant face of folly which I had hailed so often under circumstances of gaiety; which I had never seen without a smile, or recognized but as the usher of mirth; that looked out so formally flat in Foppington, so frothily pert in Tattle, so impotently busy in Backbite; so blankly divested of all meaning, or resolutely expressive of none, in Acres, in Fribble, and a thousand agreeable impertinences? Was this the face—full of thought and carefulness—that had so often divested itself at will of every trace of either to give me diversion, to clear my cloudy face for two or three hours at least of its furrows? Was this the face—manly, sober, intelligent,—which I had so often despised, made mocks at, made merry with? The remembrance of the freedoms which I had taken with it came upon me with a reproach of insult. I could have asked it pardon. I thought it looked upon me with a sense of injury. There is something strange as well as sad in seeing actors—your pleasant fellows particularly—subjected to and suffering the common lot—their fortunes, their casualties, their deaths, seem to belong to the scene, their actions to be amenable to poetic justice only. We can hardly connect them with more awful responsibilities. The death of this fine actor took place shortly after this meeting. He had quitted the stage some months; and, as I learned afterwards, had been in the habit of resorting daily to these gardens almost to the day of his decease. In these serious walks probably he was divesting himself of many scenic and some real vanities—weaning himself from the frivolities of the lesser and the greater theatre—doing gentle penance for a life of no very reprehensible fooleries,—taking off by degrees the buffoon mask which he might feel he had worn too

long—and rehearsing for a more solemn cast of part. Dying he "put on the weeds of Dominic." [1]

If few can remember Dodd, many yet living will not easily forget the pleasant creature, who in those days enacted the part of the Clown to Dodd's Sir Andrew.—Richard, or rather Dicky Suett—for so in his life-time he delighted to be called, and time hath ratified the appellation—lieth buried on the north side of the cemetery of Holy Paul, to whose service his nonage and tender years were dedicated. There are who do yet remember him at that period—his pipe clear and harmonious. He would often speak of his chorister days, when he was "cherub Dicky."

What clipped his wings, or made it expedient that he should exchange the holy for the profane state; whether he had lost his good voice (his best recommendation to that office), like Sir John, "with hallooing and singing of anthems"; or whether he was adjudged to lack something, even in those early years, of the gravity indispensable to an occupation which professeth to "commerce with the skies"— I could never rightly learn; but we find him, after the probation of a twelvemonth or so, reverting to a secular condition, and become one of us.

I think he was not altogether of that timber, out of which cathedral seats and sounding boards are hewed. But if a glad heart—kind and therefore glad —be any part of sanctity, then might the robe of

[1] Dodd was a man of reading, and left at his death a choice collection of old English literature. I should judge him to have been a man of wit. I know one instance of an impromptu which no length of study could have bettered. My merry friend, Jem White, had seen him one evening in Aguecheek, and recognising Dodd the next day in Fleet Street, was irresistibly impelled to take off his hat and salute him as the identical Knight of the preceding evening with a "Save you, *Sir Andrew*." Dodd, not at all disconcerted at this unusual address from a stranger, with a courteous half-rebuking wave of the hand, put him off with an "Away, *Fool*."

Motley, with which he invested himself with so much humility after his deprivation, and which he wore so long with so much blameless satisfaction to himself and to the public, be accepted for a surplice —his white stole, and *albe*.

The first fruits of his secularization was an engagement upon the boards of Old Drury, at which theatre he commenced, as I have been told, with adopting the manner of Parsons in old men's characters. At the period in which most of us knew him, he was no more an imitator than he was in any true sense himself imitable.

He was the Robin Good-Fellow of the stage. He came in to trouble all things with a welcome perplexity, himself no whit troubled for the matter. He was known, like Puck, by his note—*Ha! Ha! Ha!* —sometimes deepening to *Ho! Ho! Ho!* with an irresistible accession, derived perhaps remotely from his ecclesiastical education, foreign to his prototype of,—*O La!* Thousands of hearts yet respond to the chuckling *O La!* of Dicky Suett, brought back to their remembrance by the faithful transcript of his friend Mathews's mimicry. The "force of nature could no further go." He drolled upon the stock of these two syllables richer than the cuckoo.

Care, that troubles all the world, was forgotten in his composition. Had he had but two grains (nay, half a grain) of it, he could never have supported himself upon those two spider's strings, which served him (in the latter part of his unmixed existence) as legs. A doubt or a scruple must have made him totter, a sigh have puffed him down; the weight of a frown had staggered him, a wrinkle made him lose his balance. But on he went, scrambling upon those airy stilts of his, with Robin Good-fellow, "thorough brake, thorough briar," reckless of a scratched face or a torn doublet.

Shakspeare foresaw him, when he framed his fools and jesters. They have all the true Suett stamp, a loose and shambling gait, a slippery tongue, this last the ready midwife to a without-pain-delivered jest; in words, light as air, venting truths deep as the centre; with idlest rhymes tagging conceit when busiest, singing with Lear in the tempest, or Sir Toby at the buttery-hatch.

Jack Bannister and he had the fortune to be more of personal favourites with the town than any actors before or after. The difference, I take it, was this:—Jack was more *beloved* for his sweet, good-natured, moral pretensions. Dicky was more *liked* for his sweet, good-natured, no pretensions at all. Your whole conscience stirred with Bannister's performance of Walter in the Children in the Wood—but Dicky seemed like a thing, as Shakspeare says of Love, too young to know what conscience is. He puts us into Vesta's days. Evil fled before him—not as from Jack, as from an antagonist,—but because it could not touch him, any more than a cannon-ball a fly. He was delivered from the burthen of that death; and, when Death came himself, not in metaphor, to fetch Dicky, it is recorded of him by Robert Palmer, who kindly watched his exit, that he received the last stroke, neither varying his accustomed tranquillity, nor tune, with the simple exclamation, worthy to have been recorded in his epitaph—*O La! O La! Bobby!*

The elder Palmer (of stage-treading celebrity) commonly played Sir Toby in those days; but there is a solidity of wit in the jests of that half-Falstaff which he did not quite fill out. He was as much too showy as Moody (who sometimes took the part) was dry and sottish. In sock or buskin there was an air of swaggering gentility about Jack Palmer. He was a *gentleman* with a slight infusion of *the footman*. His

brother Bob (of recenter memory) who was his shadow in every thing while he lived, and dwindled into less than a shadow afterwards—was a *gentleman* with a little stronger infusion of the *latter ingredient;* that was all. It is amazing how a little of the more or less makes a difference in these things. When you saw Bobby in the Duke's Servant,[1] you said, what a pity such a pretty fellow was only a servant. When you saw Jack figuring in Captain Absolute, you thought you could trace his promotion to some lady of quality who fancied the handsome fellow in his top-knot, and had bought him a commission. Therefore Jack in Dick Amlet was insuperable.

Jack had two voices,—both plausible, hypocritical, and insinuating; but his secondary or supplemental voice still more decisively histrionic than his common one. It was reserved for the spectator; and the dramatis personæ were supposed to know nothing at all about it. The *lies* of young Wilding, and the *sentiments* in Joseph Surface, were thus marked out in a sort of italics to the audience. This secret correspondence with the company before the curtain (which is the bane and death of tragedy) has an extremely happy effect in some kinds of comedy, in the more highly artificial comedy of Congreve or of Sheridan especially, where the absolute sense of reality (so indispensable to scenes of interest) is not required, or would rather interfere to diminish your pleasure. The fact is, you do not believe in such characters as Surface—the villain of artificial comedy—even while you read or see them. If you did, they would shock and not divert you. When Ben, in Love for Love, returns from sea, the following exquisite dialogue occurs at his first meeting with his father—

[1] High Life Below Stairs.

"Ben — the pleasant sailor
which Bannister gives us"

Sir Sampson. Thou hast been many a weary league, Ben, since I saw thee.

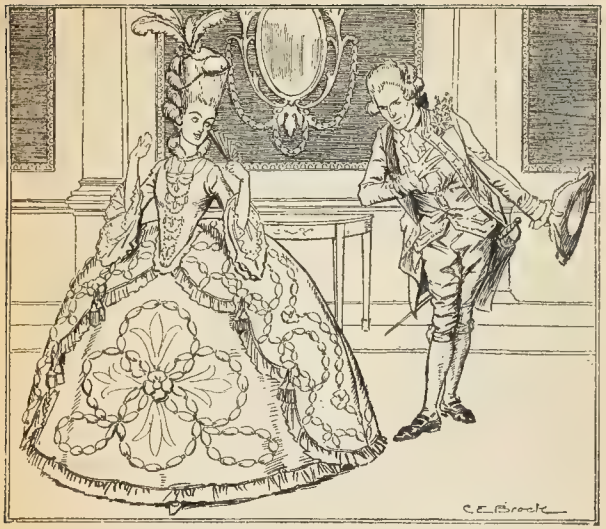
Ben. Ey, ey, been! Been far enough, an that be all.—Well, father, and how do all at home? how does brother Dick, and brother Val?

Sir Sampson. Dick! body o' me, Dick has been dead these two years. I writ you word when you were at Leghorn.

Ben. Mess, that's true; Marry, I had forgot. Dick's dead, as you say—Well, and how?—I have a many questions to ask you—

Here is an instance of insensibility which in real life would be revolting, or rather in real life could not have co-existed with the warm-hearted temperament of the character. But when you read it in the spirit with which such playful selections and specious combinations rather than strict *metaphrases* of nature should be taken, or when you saw Bannister play it, it neither did, nor does wound the moral sense at all. For what is Ben—the pleasant sailor which Bannister gives us—but a piece of satire—a creation of Congreve's fancy—a dreamy combination of all the accidents of a sailor's character—his contempt of money —his credulity to women—with that necessary estrangement from home which it is just within the verge of credibility to suppose *might* produce such an hallucination as is here described. We never think the worse of Ben for it, or feel it as a stain upon his character. But when an actor comes, and instead of the delightful phantom—the creature dear to half-belief—which Bannister exhibited—displays before our eyes a downright concretion of a Wapping sailor —a jolly warm-hearted Jack Tar—and nothing else —when instead of investing it with a delicious confusedness of the head, and a veering undirected goodness of purpose—he gives to it a downright daylight understanding, and a full consciousness of its actions; thrusting forward the sensibilities of the character with a pretence as if it stood upon nothing else,

and was to be judged by them alone—we feel the discord of the thing; the scene is disturbed; a real man has got in among the dramatis personæ, and puts them out. We want the sailor turned out. We feel that his true place is not behind the curtain but in the first or second gallery.



ON THE ARTIFICIAL COMEDY OF THE LAST CENTURY

THE artificial Comedy, or Comedy or Manners, is quite extinct on our stage. Congreve and Farquhar show their heads once in seven years only, to be exploded and put down instantly. The times cannot bear them. Is it for a few wild speeches, an occasional licence of dialogue? I think not altogether. The business of their dramatic characters will not stand the moral test. We screw every thing up to that. Idle gallantry in a fiction, a dream, the passing pageant of an evening, startles us in the same way as the alarming indications of profligacy in a son or ward in real life should startle a parent or guardian.

We have no such middle emotions as dramatic interests left. We see a stage libertine playing his loose pranks of two hours' duration, and of no after consequence, with the severe eyes which inspect real vices with their bearings upon two worlds. We are spectators to a plot or intrigue (not reducible in life to the point of strict morality) and take it all for truth. We substitute a real for a dramatic person, and judge him accordingly. We try him in our courts, from which there is no appeal to the *dramatis personæ*, his peers. We have been spoiled with—not sentimental comedy—but a tyrant far more pernicious to our pleasures which has succeeded to it, the exclusive and all devouring drama of common life; where the moral point is every thing; where, instead of the fictitious half-believed personages of the stage (the phantoms of old comedy) we recognise ourselves, our brothers, aunts, kinsfolk, allies, patrons, enemies,—the same as in life,—with an interest in what is going on so hearty and substantial, that we cannot afford our moral judgment, in its deepest and most vital results, to compromise or slumber for a moment. What is *there* transacting, by no modification is made to affect us in any other manner than the same events or characters would do in our relationships of life. We carry our fire-side concerns to the theatre with us. We do not go thither, like our ancestors, to escape from the pressure of reality, so much as to confirm our experience of it; to make assurance double, and take a bond of fate. We must live our toilsome lives twice over, as it was the mournful privilege of Ulysses to descend twice to the shades. All that neutral ground of character, which stood between vice and virtue; or which in fact was indifferent to neither, where neither properly was called in question; that happy breathing-place from the burthen of a perpetual moral questioning—the sanc-

tuary and quiet Alsatia of hunted casuistry—is broken up and disfranchised, as injurious to the interests of society. The privileges of the place are taken away by law. We dare not dally with images, or names, of wrong. We bark like foolish dogs at shadows. We dread infection from the scenic representation of disorder; and fear a painted pustule. In our anxiety that our morality should not take cold, we wrap it up in a great blanket surtout of precaution against the breeze and sunshine.

I confess for myself that (with no great delinquencies to answer for) I am glad for a season to take an airing beyond the diocese of the strict conscience,—not to live always in the precincts of the law-courts—but now and then, for a dream-while or so, to imagine a world with no meddling restrictions—to get into recesses, whither the hunter cannot follow me—

> ———— Secret shades
> Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
> While yet there was no fear of Jove—

I come back to my cage and my restraint the fresher and more healthy for it. I wear my shackles more contentedly for having respired the breath of an imaginary freedom. I do not know how it is with others, but I feel the better always for the perusal of one of Congreve's—nay, why should I not add even of Wycherley's—comedies. I am the gayer at least for it; and I could never connect those sports of a witty fancy in any shape with any result to be drawn from them to imitation in real life. They are a world of themselves almost as much as fairy-land. Take one of their characters, male or female (with few exceptions they are alike), and place it in a modern play, and my virtuous indignation shall rise against the profligate wretch as warmly as the Catos

of the pit could desire ; because in a modern play I am to judge of the right and the wrong. The standard of *police* is the measure of *political justice*. The atmosphere will blight it, it cannot live here. It has got into a moral world, where it has no business, from which it must needs fall headlong ; as dizzy, and incapable of making a stand, as a Swedenborgian bad spirit that has wandered unawares into the sphere of one of his Good Men or Angels. But in its own world do we feel the creature is so very bad ?—The Fainalls and the Mirabels, the Dorimants and the Lady Touchwoods, in their own sphere, do not offend my moral sense ; in fact they do not appeal to it at all. They seem engaged in their proper element. They break through no laws, or conscientious restraints. They know of none. They have got out of Christendom into the land—what shall I call it?—of cuckoldry—the Utopia of gallantry, where pleasure is duty, and the manners perfect freedom. It is altogether a speculative scene of things, which has no reference whatever to the world that is. No good person can be justly offended as a spectator, because no good person suffers on the stage. Judged morally, every character in these plays—the few exceptions only are *mistakes*—is alike essentially vain and worthless. The great art of Congreve is especially shown in this, that he has entirely excluded from his scenes,—some little generosities on the part of Angelica perhaps excepted,—not only any thing like a faultless character, but any pretensions to goodness or good feelings whatsoever. Whether he did this designedly, or instinctively, the effect is as happy, as the design (if design) was bold. I used to wonder at the strange power which his Way of the World in particular possesses of interesting you all along in the pursuits of characters, for whom you absolutely care nothing—for you neither hate nor love his personages

—and I think it is owing to this very indifference for any, that you endure the whole. He has spread a privation of moral light, I will call it, rather than by the ugly name of palpable darkness, over his creations; and his shadows flit before you without distinction or preference. Had he introduced a good character, a single gush of moral feeling, a revulsion of the judgment to actual life and actual duties, the impertinent Goshen would have only lighted to the discovery of deformities, which now are none, because we think them none.

Translated into real life, the characters of his, and his friend Wycherley's dramas, are profligates and strumpets,—the business of their brief existence, the undivided pursuit of lawless gallantry. No other spring of action, or possible motive of conduct, is recognised; principles which, universally acted upon, must reduce this frame of things to a chaos. But we do them wrong in so translating them. No such effects are produced in *their* world. When we are among them, we are amongst a chaotic people. We are not to judge them by our usages. No reverend institutions are insulted by their proceedings,—for they have none among them. No peace of families is violated,—for no family ties exist among them. No purity of the marriage bed is stained,—for none is supposed to have a being. No deep affections are disquieted,—no holy wedlock bands are snapped asunder,—for affection's depth and wedded faith are not of the growth of that soil. There is neither right nor wrong,—gratitude or its opposite,—claim or duty,—paternity or sonship. Of what consequence is it to virtue, or how is she at all concerned about it, whether Sir Simon, or Dapperwit, steal away Miss Martha; or who is the father of Lord Froth's, or Sir Paul Pliant's children.

The whole is a passing pageant, where we should

sit as unconcerned at the issues, for life or death, as at a battle of the frogs and mice. But, like Don Quixote, we take part against the puppets, and quite as impertinently. We dare not contemplate an Atlantis, a scheme, out of which our coxcombical moral sense is for a little transitory ease excluded. We have not the courage to imagine a state of things for which there is neither reward nor punishment. We cling to the painful necessities of shame and blame. We would indict our very dreams.

Amidst the mortifying circumstances attendant upon growing old, it is something to have seen the School for Scandal in its glory. This comedy grew out of Congreve and Wycherley, but gathered some allays of the sentimental comedy which followed theirs. It is impossible that it should be now *acted*, though it continues, at long intervals, to be announced in the bills. Its hero, when Palmer played it at least, was Joseph Surface. When I remember the gay boldness, the graceful solemn plausibility, the measured step, the insinuating voice—to express it in a word—the downright *acted* villany of the part, so different from the pressure of conscious actual wickedness,—the hypocritical assumption of hypocrisy,—which made Jack so deservedly a favourite in that character, I must needs conclude the present generation of play-goers more virtuous than myself, or more dense. I freely confess that he divided the palm with me with his better brother ; that, in fact, I liked him quite as well. Not but there are passages,—like that, for instance, where Joseph is made to refuse a pittance to a poor relation,—incongruities which Sheridan was forced upon by the attempt to join the artificial with the sentimental comedy, either of which must destroy the other—but over these obstructions Jack's manner floated him so lightly, that a refusal from him no more shocked you, than the easy compliance of Charles gave

you in reality any pleasure ; you got over the paltry question as quickly as you could, to get back into the regions of pure comedy, where no cold moral reigns. The highly artificial manner of Palmer in this character counteracted every disagreeable impression which you might have received from the contrast, supposing them real, between the two brothers. You did not believe in Joseph with the same faith with which you believed in Charles. The latter was a pleasant reality, the former a no less pleasant poetical foil to it. The comedy, I have said, is incongruous ; a mixture of Congreve with sentimental incompatibilities : the gaiety upon the whole is buoyant ; but it required the consummate art of Palmer to reconcile the discordant elements.

A player with Jack's talents, if we had one now, would not dare to do the part in the same manner. He would instinctively avoid every turn which might tend to unrealise, and so to make the character fascinating. He must take his cue from his spectators, who would expect a bad man and a good man as rigidly opposed to each other as the death-beds of those geniuses are contrasted in the prints, which I am sorry to say have disappeared from the windows of my old friend Carrington Bowles, of St Paul's Church-yard memory—(an exhibition as venerable as the adjacent cathedral, and almost coeval) of the bad and good man at the hour of death ; where the ghastly apprehensions of the former,—and truly the grim phantom with his reality of a toasting fork is not to be despised,—so finely contrast with the meek complacent kissing of the rod,—taking it in like honey and butter,—with which the latter submits to the scythe of the gentle bleeder, Time, who wields his lancet with the apprehensive finger of a popular young ladies' surgeon. What flesh, like loving grass, would not covet to meet half-way the stroke of such a

delicate mower ?—John Palmer was twice an actor in this exquisite part. He was playing to you all the while that he was playing upon Sir Peter and his lady. You had the first intimation of a sentiment before it was on his lips. His altered voice was meant to you, and you were to suppose that his fictitious co-flutterers on the stage perceived nothing at all of it. What was it to you if that half-reality, the husband, was over-reached by the puppetry—or the thin thing (Lady Teazle's reputation) was persuaded it was dying of a plethory ? The fortunes of Othello and Desdemona were not concerned in it. Poor Jack has passed from the stage in good time, that he did not live to this our age of seriousness. The pleasant old Teazle *King*, too, is gone in good time. His manner would scarce have passed current in our day. We must love or hate—acquit or condemn—censure or pity—exert our detestable coxcombry of moral judgment upon everything. Joseph Surface, to go down now, must be a downright revolting villain—no compromise—his first appearance must shock and give horror—his specious plausibilities, which the pleasurable faculties of our fathers welcomed with such hearty greetings, knowing that no harm (dramatic harm even) could come, or was meant to come of them, must inspire a cold and killing aversion. Charles (the real canting person of the scene—for the hypocrisy of Joseph has its ulterior legitimate ends, but his brother's professions of a good heart, centre in downright self-satisfaction) must be *loved*, and Joseph *hated*. To balance one disagreeable reality with another, Sir Peter Teazle must be no longer the comic idea of a fretful old bachelor bridegroom, whose teasings (while King acted it) were evidently as much played off at you, as they were meant to concern any body on the stage,—he must be a real person, capable in law of sustaining an injury—a person towards whom duties are to be

acknowledged—the genuine crim-con antagonist of the villanous seducer Joseph. To realise him more, his sufferings under his unfortunate match must have the downright pungency of life—must (or should) make you not mirthful but uncomfortable, just as the same predicament would move you in a neighbour or old friend. The delicious scenes which give the play its name and zest, must affect you in the same serious manner as if you heard the reputation of a dear female friend attacked in your real presence. Crabtree, and Sir Benjamin—those poor snakes that live but in the sunshine of your mirth—must be ripened by this hot-bed process of realisation into asps or amphisbænas; and Mrs Candour—O! frightful! become a hooded serpent. Oh who that remembers Parsons and Dodd—the wasp and butterfly of the School for Scandal—in those two characters; and charming natural Miss Pope, the perfect gentlewoman as distinguished from the fine lady of comedy, in this latter part—would forego the true scenic delight—the escape from life—the oblivion of consequences—the holiday barring out of the pedant Reflection—those Saturnalia of two or three brief hours, well won from the world—to sit instead at one of our modern plays—to have his coward conscience (that forsooth must not be left for a moment) stimulated with perpetual appeals—dulled rather, and blunted, as a faculty without repose must be—and his moral vanity pampered with images of notional justice, notional beneficences, lives saved without the spectators' risk, and fortunes given away that cost the author nothing?

No piece was, perhaps, ever so completely cast in all its parts as this *manager's comedy*. Miss Farren had succeeded to Mrs Abingdon in Lady Teazle; and Smith, the original Charles, had retired when I first saw it. The rest of the characters, with very slight exceptions, remained. I remember it was then the

fashion to cry down John Kemble, who took the part of Charles after Smith ; but, I thought, very unjustly. Smith, I fancy, was more airy, and took the eye with a certain gaiety of person. He brought with him no sombre recollections of tragedy. He had not to expiate the fault of having pleased beforehand in lofty declamation. He had no sins of Hamlet or of Richard to atone for. His failure in these parts was a passport to success in one of so opposite a tendency. But, as far as I could judge, the weighty sense of Kemble made up for more personal incapacity than he had to answer for. His harshest tones in this part came steeped and dulcified in good humour. He made his defects a grace. His exact declamatory manner, as he managed it, only served to convey the points of his dialogue with more precision. It seemed to head the shafts to carry them deeper. Not one of his sparkling sentences was lost. I remember minutely how he delivered each in succession, and cannot by any effort imagine how any of them could be altered for the better. No man could deliver brilliant dialogue—the dialogue of Congreve or of Wycherley—because none understood it—half so well as John Kemble. His Valentine, in Love for Love, was, to my recollection, faultless. He flagged sometimes in the intervals of tragic passion. He would slumber over the level parts of an heroic character. His Macbeth has been known to nod. But he always seemed to me to be particularly alive to pointed and witty dialogue. The relaxing levities of tragedy have not been touched by any since him—the playful court-bred spirit in which he condescended to the players in Hamlet—the sportive relief which he threw into the darker shades of Richard—disappeared with him. He had his sluggish moods, his torpors—but they were the halting-stones and resting-places of his tragedy—politic savings, and fetches of the breath—husbandry

of the lungs, where nature pointed him to be an economist—rather, I think, than errors of the judgment. They were, at worst, less painful than the eternal tormenting unappeasable vigilance, the "lidless dragon eyes," of present fashionable tragedy.

ON THE ACTING OF MUNDEN

NOT many nights ago I had come home from seeing this extraordinary performer in Cockletop; and when I retired to my pillow, his whimsical image still stuck by me, in a manner as to threaten sleep. In vain I tried to divest myself of it, by conjuring up the most opposite associations. I resolved to be serious. I raised up the gravest topics of life; private misery, public calamity. All would not do

> ———There the antic sate
> Mocking our state—

his queer visnomy—his bewildering costume—all the strange things which he had raked together—his serpentine rod, swagging about in his pocket—Cleopatra's tear, and the rest of his relics—O'Keefe's wild farce, and *his* wilder commentary—till the passion of laughter, like grief in excess, relieved itself by its own weight, inviting the sleep which in the first instance it had driven away.

But I was not to escape so easily. No sooner did I fall into slumbers, than the same image, only more perplexing, assailed me in the shape of dreams. Not one Munden, but five hundred, were dancing before

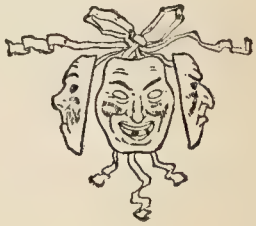
me, like the faces which, whether you will or no, come when you have been taking opium—all the strange combinations, which this strangest of all strange mortals ever shot his proper countenance into, from the day he came commissioned to dry up the tears of the town for the loss of the now almost forgotten Edwin. O for the power of the pencil to have fixed them when I awoke! A season or two since there was exhibited a Hogarth gallery. I do not see why there should not be a Munden gallery. In richness and variety the latter would not fall far short of the former.

There is one face of Farley, one face of Knight, one (but what a one it is!) of Liston; but Munden has none that you can properly pin down, and call *his*. When you think he has exhausted his battery of looks, in unaccountable warfare with your gravity, suddenly he sprouts out an entirely new set of features, like Hydra. He is not one, but legion. Not so much a comedian, as a company. If his name could be multiplied like his countenance, it might fill a play-bill. He, and he alone literally *makes faces:* applied to any other person, the phrase is a mere figure, denoting certain modifications of the human countenance. Out of some invisible wardrobe he dips for faces, as his friend Suett used for wigs, and fetches them out as easily. I should not be surprised to see him some day put out the head of a river horse; or come forth a pewitt, or lapwing, some feathered metamorphosis.

I have seen this gifted actor in Sir Christopher Curry—in Old Dornton—diffuse a glow of sentiment which has made the pulse of a crowded theatre beat like that of one man; when he has come in aid of the pulpit, doing good to the moral heart of a people. I have seen some faint approaches to this sort of excellence in other players. But in the grand

grotesque of farce, Munden stands out as single and unaccompanied as Hogarth. Hogarth, strange to tell, had no followers. The school of Munden began, and must end with himself.

Can any man *wonder*, like him? can any man *see ghosts*, like him? or *fight with his own shadow*—"SESSA"—as he does in that strangely-neglected thing, the Cobbler of Preston—where his alternations from the Cobbler to the Magnifico, and from the Magnifico to the Cobbler, keep the brain of the spectator in as wild a ferment, as if some Arabian Night were being acted before him. Who like him can throw, or ever attempted to throw, a preternatural interest over the commonest daily-life objects? A table, or a joint-stool, in his conception, rises into a dignity equivalent to Cassiopeia's chair. It is invested with constellatory importance. You could not speak of it with more deference, if it were mounted into the firmament. A beggar in the hands of Michael Angelo, says Fuseli, rose the Patriarch of Poverty. So the gusto of Munden antiquates and ennobles what it touches. His pots and his ladles are as grand and primal as the seething-pots and hooks seen in old prophetic vision. A tub of butter, contemplated by him, amounts to a Platonic idea. He understands a leg of mutton in its quiddity. He stands wondering, amid the common-place materials of life, like primæval man with the sun and stars about him.



NOTES TO
"ESSAYS OF ELIA"

NOTES TO "ESSAYS OF ELIA"

The South-Sea House

("London Magazine," August 1820)

At some time between his leaving Christ's Hospital in 1789 and his entering the East India House in 1792, Lamb received an appointment in the South-Sea House, doubtless through the good interest of Mr Samuel Salt (see *The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple*), who was at this time a Deputy Governor. Charles did not remain many months in this establishment—where the opportunities of advancement must have been of rare occurrence—but his brother John remained there till his death, and seems to have arrived at a good official status and salary pretty early: probably one of the last retainers of that House who were so fortunate. The mystification as to date ("such it was forty years ago, when I knew it") is a little touch worth noting, and the first of a long train in that kind.

"*His fine official suite of rooms . . . I know not who is the occupier of them now.*" This confession of ignorance prepared the way for a footnote, which preludes pleasantly to the Essay *My Relations*: —"I have since been informed that the present tenant of them is Mr Lamb, a gentleman who is happy in the possession of some choice pictures, and among them a rare portrait of Milton, which I mean to do myself the pleasure of going to see, and at the same time to refresh my memory with the sight of old scenes. Mr Lamb has the name of a right courteous and communicative collector."

"*Henry Man, the wit,*" *etc.* The best remembered thing in the "two forgotten volumes" is that epigram which Lamb quotes in a letter to Miss Hutchinson:

> "Two noble earls, whom if I quote,
> Some folks might call me sinner,
> The one invented half a coat,
> The other half a dinner.
>
> "The plan was good, as some will say,
> And fitted to console one;
> Because in this poor starving day
> Few can afford a whole one."

The noble earls were, of course, Spencer and Sandwich.

"*Mild, child-like, pastoral M——.*" In a "Key" to the personal references in the Essays, which Lamb wrote at a later time to oblige a friend, he explains this passage thus: "— Maynard, hang'd himself."

"*Summoned before the House of Commons about a business of franks.*" A reference to the "Life of Cave" will show that there is some inaccuracy here, and Canon Ainger's note on the passage indicates that the genealogical information or surmises in the immediate neighbourhood are all very disputable. What is not disputable is that Lamb had a very great interest in the Plumers of Hertfordshire, and a kindly feeling toward that family, to whom his maternal grandmother, Mrs Field, was for more than fifty years housekeeper—and for some part of the time practically mistress of their house—at Blakesware. See the Essay (one of the most essentially autobiographical in either Series) *Blakesmoor in H——shire;* also *Dream-Children* in this volume; and (in the "Poems") *The Grandame.*

Oxford in the Vacation

("London Magazine," October 1820)

"*G. D.*" Born in 1755 of poor parents, and educated at Christ's Hospital and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, *George Dyer* was a very considerable author and extensive annotator of the classics, yet withal a bookworm rather than a literary man, and an antiquarian rather than a scholar. He would hardly, indeed, have recognised the distinction between this term and that in either of those pairs; but in a circle of friends all bookish and literary and some of them prone to contempt and apt to be terrible (as, for instance, Hazlitt) there was generally nothing but love for George Dyer; and Lamb especially had a kind of enthusiastic delight in his serious goodness and simplicity. See the Essay *Amicus Redivivus*, and references in the Letters; also a passage concerning him placed amongst *Fragments of Criticism* in vol. iii. of this Edition.

"*None thinks of offering violence or injustice to him.*" In the Essay as it first appeared in the "London Magazine" the following was appended as a foot-note: "Violence or injustice, certainly none, Mr Elia. But you will acknowledge that the charming unsuspectingness of our friend has sometimes laid him open to attacks, which, though savouring (we hope) more of waggery than of malice—such is our unfeigned respect for G. D.—might, we think, much better have been omitted. Such was that silly joke of L——, who, at the time the question of the Scotch novels was first agitated, gravely assured our friend—who as gravely went about repeating it in all companies—that Lord Castlereagh had acknowledged himself to be the author of Waverley! *Note,*

not by Elia." Doubtless, however, the note was by nobody else; and Lamb elsewhere enlarges with enjoyment on this same little joke of his.

"*My friend M.'s in Bedford Square.*" Basil Montagu, the Q.C. and that editor of Bacon reviewed by Macaulay in the well-known Essay. *Pretty A. S.* was Anne Skepper, daughter of Mrs Montagu and afterwards the wife of B. W. Procter.

"*Still less have I curiosity to disturb the elder repose of MSS.*" See in vol. iii. of this Edition (under *Critical Fragments*) the passage beginning: "There is something to me repugnant at any time in written hand."

Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago

("London Magazine," November 1820)

"*In Mr Lamb's Works,*" *etc.* "The Works of Charles Lamb: in Two Volumes. London. Printed for C. and J. Ollier, Vere Street, Bond Street. 1818." Such was the title-page of this first collection of Lamb's prose and verse. It contained *Recollections of Christ's Hospital* (see vol. iv. of this Edition), an entirely laudatory article, which is perhaps in its author's second-best vein. In the present Essay he tries to do justice to the other side, and lets the voices of children unhappy in their school-loneliness be heard. To do this, he puts himself in the place of no imaginary sufferer, but in that of his own schoolfellow and friend, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. For explicit assurance in regard to this, see Gillman's Life of Coleridge. Consequently, "sweet Calne in Wiltshire" is a little mystification, and veils "Sweet Ottery St. Mary in Devon." For further particulars about the Rev. James Boyer, and life at Christ's Hospital under his rod and roar, see Leigh Hunt's Autobiography and (for the optimistic side) Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria."

"*There was one H——.*" Lamb's "Key" says "Hodges." We gather thence also that *Dr T——e* was Dr Trollope (who succeeded Boyer at Christ's); *Th——* was Thornton, in the diplomatic service; *Poor S——* was Scott, died in Bedlam; *Ill-fated M——* was Maunde, dismissed school; *C. V. le G.* was Charles Valentine Le Grice. He became a clergyman and survived Lamb, and we are indebted to him for an interesting description of Charles Lamb as a schoolboy. The younger *Le Grice* (Samuel, alluded to later in the Essay) died in the West Indies. After leaving school he had shown rare kindness to the Lambs at a time of great difficulty and sorrow, and had indeed been "even as a brother" to Charles. *Stevens*, at the beginning of the list, should be *Stephens*. *F——* is *Favell*, killed in the Peninsula. For his story, see the Essay on *Poor Relations* in vol. ii.

"*Thomas Fanshaw Middleton.*" This tribute to the "scholar and

gentleman in his teens" has a pleasant side significance. It was Middleton, himself the most brilliant and promising of Boyer's pupils at the time, who first discovered the precocious and spontaneous scholarship of a lower-form lad named Coleridge, and by calling Boyer's attention to it also, had the young pundit brought forward in the school. Thereafter at Christ's, and later at Cambridge, Coleridge looked up to Middleton as a being in every way brighter and more accomplished than himself, his ideal of the scholar and the gentleman. His hero's failure, presently, to carry off those academic honours which seem to be his by right, *helped*, at any rate, to bring about in Coleridge that condition of self-distrust and helplessness, under the influence of which he wandered to London at the end of 1791 and enlisted as a private dragoon. Lamb's praise of Middleton, therefore, has in it a secret core of loyalty and homage to someone else—he delights to give noble praise to one who was so much admired by the friend whom he himself admired, his whole life long, beyond all men living.

"*Which two I beheld*," *etc.* From Fuller's oft-quoted account of the wit-combats between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. But if one of those two schoolfellows was to take Shakespeare's place in the analogy, one would have expected the honour to be assigned to Coleridge; who, at least in the days before opium and German metaphysics, could be as witty and epigrammatic as anyone else when he had a mind—just as Shakespeare, whose genius was jocular (*teste* Jeremy Collier), did very well in the serious parts of writing when it was required of him.

The Two Races of Men

("London Magazine," December 1820)

"*Ralph Bigod*," John Fenwick, Editor of the "Albion"; but some suggestion may have been afforded by Lamb's long acquaintance with William Godwin, a notably naïve and generous-minded borrower.

"*Comberbatch*" should be *Comberbacke*, the name which Coleridge gave when he enlisted in the dragoons: "And verily, my habits were so little equestrian, that my horse, I doubt not, was of that opinion."

"*Wayward, spiteful K.*" James Kenney, the dramatist, author of "Raising the Wind," whose wife was French. The Lambs visited them at Versailles in 1822.

"*S. T. C.*" Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

New Year's Eve

("London Magazine," January 1821)

"*Alice W——n.*" In the "Key," Lamb explains thus: "Feigned (Winterton.)" Which seems to mean that the reader is to guess that the name is Winterton, and to rest assured that he is wrong.

Mrs Battle's Opinions on Whist

("London Magazine," February 1821)

Lamb very seldom, if at any time, invented a character or a type for any of his Essays. He had no need to invent them; for he had the still rarer gift of *finding* them, of seeing, discerning them, in the humanity around him. For this reason, we nearly always ask "who was his original?" for this or that; and the answer can nearly always be found. Mrs Battle is an exception; we cannot say what was her name in the common world of us all, or in what part of England she lived. Her reality in the world of Literature, nevertheless, is of the greatest, unmistakeable and enduring; and there is none who does not know in what region of it she lives forever. For the rest: "Be satisfied that something answering to her has had a being. Her importance is from the past."

"*I had the pleasure of sending . . . to Mr Bowles.*" William Lisle Bowles, of slender sonnet fame, brought out an edition of Pope early in the century.

"*Bridget Elia*" is the name under which Mary Lamb moves through the Essays.

A Chapter on Ears

("London Magazine," March 1821)

"*My friend A.'s.*" William Ayrton, one of Lamb's correspondents and familiars, was a musical critic. *My good Catholic friend Nov.* was Vincent Novello, a friend of all the Lamb group, and the father of Mary Victoria, better known as Mrs Cowden Clarke, of Shakespeare Concordance celebrity, though her "Recollections of Writers" is a more interesting and readable book, especially to lovers of Charles Lamb.

The writer of this Essay cannot have been, and other passages show pretty convincingly that he was not "without an ear for music," save in a very relative and limited sense. There are all degrees of hindrance or inhibition of executive power—due to some imperfect muscular or nervous co-ordinations. Some men who are extremely *receptive* to the effects of music and even most quick to feel a fault or a false note, yet could not whistle or hum three bars correctly for their lives. Their hearts would call for one

tune, but their voices or their lips would perform another. Lamb seems to have been of this kind; not so much without the receptive ear, as without the expressive organ.

All Fools' Day

("London Magazine," April 1821)

According to Lamb's "Key," *Honest R.* was "Ramsay, London Library, Ludgate St.; now extinct." The latter remark referred doubtless to the Library alone, but it is queerly comprehensive now. If the Library was one of *Honest R.'s* indiscretions, there is little difference to-day between the fool and his folly. From the same "Key" we learn that *Granville S.* was Granville Sharp, the Abolitionist, whose eccentricities were a common topic of his time.

As for *Mister Adams*, the reader who does not know him must seek an introduction from Mr. Henry Fielding; and the mention, in this Essay, of Cleombrotus, Empedocles and others of that old world, reminds one that more learned books have quite driven out Lemprière, and yet have not taken his place. Which seems a double pity.

A Quaker's Meeting

("London Magazine," April 1821)

Lamb's sympathy with the Quakers is one of the most notable of the "secondary characters" (as naturalists say) of his mind, the lesser marks that we know him by; and a certain Quaker-likeness in the impression which he gave to observers—especially to such as met him only in the sedate way of business—has been often remarked upon.

"*The Writings of John Woolman*" were various, and we may be sure that if Lamb knew any of them, he knew all. In 1774 was published in Philadelphia "The Works of John Woolman, in two parts, viz.: Part I., *The Journal of John Woolman;* and Part II., *Other Writings.*" A London edition appeared in the following year. "I have often felt a motion of love to leave some hints in writing of my experience of the goodness of God, and now, in the thirty-sixth year of my age, I begin this work." So begins the *Journal;* which leaves some hints in writing of the unimaginable goodness of man, when he can perform the miracle, to begin with, of forgetting *himself* utterly in all his aims, and in all his labours, and even with a pen in his hand.

"*Whitening the easterly streets of the Metropolis.*" The principal Meeting House of the Society of Friends was then, and still is, in the heart of the City. This Temple of Silence stands to-day in the unlikely purlieus—seething with passengers, and dense with the roar of multitudinous chariots and their shouting charioteers—of Liverpool Street Station.

The Old and the New Schoolmaster

("London Magazine," May 1821)

"*My friend M.*" "Manning—perhaps, next to Coleridge, the dearest of all his friends—whom Lamb used to speak of as marvellous in a *tête-à-tête*, but who, in company, seemed only a courteous gentleman, more disposed to listen than to talk." Thus Talfourd. Manning was a mathematical tutor at Cambridge, for whose sake Lamb liked to spend his vacations in that town, and even, as we see, underwent a mild initiation in the mysteries of a science most alien, if not abhorrent, to the bent of his own mind. We feel that Manning must indeed have been marvellous in a *tête-à-tête*. A passage in Allsop (2nd Ed. p. 114) gives us a vague and vast sort of impression of Manning as a man having much strange knowledge, with a touch of almost supernaturalism about him, by which his hearers were sometimes hypnotised and caught into a rapture. He went to China, and so becomes associated with the *Essay on Roast Pig*. Finally, there is much to him, and much about him, in the "Letters."

Valentine's Day

(Reprinted, in Leigh Hunt's "Indicator" for February 1821, from the "Examiner," 1819)

"*E. B.*" Edward Francis Burney (1760–1848), a cousin of the famous Fanny Burney, and a portrait-painter and book-illustrator. He must not be confused with that younger friend, Martin Burney ("the true-hearted son of Admiral Burney"), who was such a favourite of Mary and Charles Lamb, and had known them from his earliest years, and who—thirteen years after Charles's death—came away from the grave in which Mary had just been laid, crying like a child.

Imperfect Sympathies

("London Magazine," August 1821)

This Essay is one of those little works of Lamb which are great masterpieces, and the only doubt is whether to describe them as classics of scientific analysis or instances of his imaginative mastery of a subject. All the world has praised it, and a Scottish editor is, for an obvious reason, in a peculiar degree challenged to add his word. Let me say at once that I yield to nobody in my admiration of Lamb just here, and find in this Essay rare proofs of his mental penetration, his tact, and his dominating kindliness of heart. Its genesis and intention have, I think, usually been misunderstood. It would be too long to demonstrate here how self-evident it is that Lamb aimed in this disquisition to make his countrymen feel a little more at ease than

they might otherwise have felt on the score of those *little mental defects of theirs*, and those incurable *foibles of character* (addictedness to maudlin and trivial witticism, for instance) which made them, good fellows as they were at heart, show rather poorly (as he must have seen) against the more gifted and strongly-formed characters who came among them occasionally from the better side of the Tweed. All Lamb is in this part of the Essay; in the kindness of its intention, and in the cunning of its execution. And he has succeeded admirably in doing what he meant to do (for every Englishman since has felt that he understands every Scotsman, and makes allowance for his "want of humour," even when he does not refer to it); yet has done so without impairing in the least the self-content of the nation which he *makes a pretence* of disparaging. But indeed he knew that *they* would understand, and would sympathise perfectly—he could trust their famous analytic faculty to *discern*, their unsleeping good sense to *forgive*, if offence was done in passing, for a kind and humane cause. Only *so* much may one say here, to indicate generally rather than to expound adequately. The subject craves a treatise.

This I must add, however; that though Lamb was privileged to know but few Scotsmen intimately (and alas! never saw Scotland save in his happier dreams), upon the two or three Scotsmen whom he did know he set an abundant value. For Edward Irving his admiration overflowed and outran him, an eager, boyish, almost gesticulatory delight and enthusiasm. To Allan Cunningham—"the great-hearted Scot," as he called him—he signed himself "Yours, with perfect sympathy;" and Thomas Hood he knew and loved as all the world must love that excellent fellow. This Hood, it may be necessary to explain, was the celebrated English Humourist of that name, born of Scottish parents and bred—not as to his childhood, but as to his boyhood and youth—in the well-known London suburb of Dundee-on-the-Tay. And the only man of his generation who ever made a long pilgrimage on purpose to pay his respects to the genius of Lamb in his lifetime was a Scotsman, one of the noble brothers Chambers.

"*B. would have been more in keeping*," *etc.* Braham, the great tenor, who, after selling pencils in the streets as a boy, rose to immense fame as a singer and made unheard-of fortunes by his profession, dominating the operatic and concert stage of England for an entire generation. Lamb elsewhere describes him as "a compound of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel."

Witches and other Night Fears

("London Magazine," October 1821)

"*Little T. H.*" is "Thornton Hunt, my favourite child," as Lamb called him in some charming verses that will be found in "Poems

and Plays" (vol. v. of this Edition). The reference to little Hunt in this Essay belongs to the history of literary friendships and the quarrels of authors: an unfortunate and unfair use of this passage which was made by Southey in a "Quarterly" article, having deeply offended Lamb. For the story, see *Letter of Elia to Robert Southey, Esq.*, in "Critical Essays."

My Relations

("London Magazine," June 1821)

"*I had an aunt, a dear and good one.*" This is the "Aunt Hetty" of the "Letters"; whose peculiar fondness for Charles meets us pleasantly, ever and again, as a relenting smile on a somewhat time-crabbed face. See, for instance, *Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago*, also *Dissertation on Roast Pig;* and, for an earlier touch, most intimate and pathetic, the blank verse *Lines Written on the Day of My Aunt's Funeral.* The affection between the nephew and aunt—more like what is wont to subsist between grandchild and grandam—is one of the things best worth keeping hold of in forming our general conception of the Lamb household and the relations of its members. One gathers that Aunt Hetty considered that *other people* had not *enough* affection or care for the little lad; and perhaps nobody but he had a great deal of affection for her. Mary Lamb says that she was a good creature, but indicates also that she was wanting in what one may call fineness, and was apt to have a distaste for that distinction in others (in Charles's mother, for instance), and to see nothing but the motive, and the implied judgment of herself, in their tactful friendliness towards her. This want of complete coincidence of temperament and gifts between the two sisters-in-law made a certain amount of tension, or at least of anxiety as to how things would be taken, a pretty constant element of the situation in that household. But the essential fact in the life-history of Aunt Hetty, after all, was her great love for the little boy her nephew, whom doubtless she thought she had great need to save from utter neglect and overlooking, and especially from being allowed to die of hunger. Being such an aunt, what would Hetty not have been as a grandmother?

"*The chapel in Essex-street:*" the famous Unitarian place of worship there, with which are connected the names of so many preachers of great intellectual power, especially in the earlier part of last century.

"*Brother, or sister, I never had any.*" This was of course quite true; since he had decided beforehand that John and Mary were, for purposes of publication, his cousins.

"*James is an inexplicable cousin.*" It would be an impertinence, passing that of Editors—and, what is more, a rashness and a

folly—to add a word to the wonderful portrait that follows here: except to say that the inexplicable is brought, against all previous probabilities, into our narrower comprehension, and made to have a familiar and friendly look. We have all known James Elia in parts, or at stages of his formation; some, almost in his totality of congruent contradictions: but the whole living man was seen by Charles Elia alone. Readers will do well to compare this artistic and finished presentment of a character with the broken but illuminating glimpses of it afforded by the "Letters" towards the end of 1796. And if they do not know James Elia better after the comparison, at least they will love Charles more.

"*At the foot of John Murray's street:*" Albemarle-street, Piccadilly, where the famous publishing-house was and still is.

"*A Society for the Relief of,*" *etc.* The fifteen asterisks in the original Edition stood for "Distrest Sailors."

Mackery End in Hertfordshire

("London Magazine," July 1821)

"*Bridget Elia.*" It is a thing worthy of note that Lamb, who has so much to seek in some essentials of dramatic writing, had yet so unfailing a gift and happiness of touch when he set about to give account of a character in its attributes, its individual mark and self-likeness, as distinguished from its behaviour in action and the play of complex motive, seen from within. Sometimes, with him, a pun upon some peculiarity of a friend is a flash of interpretation; and his set descriptions are a portrait forever. In writing of his sister Mary, he worked under the hindrances of many delicate considerations; and yet here also he has carried it off with grace and inimitableness. The large essential grasp and truth of this loving and playful study has only been brought out by the fuller knowledge that has come to us in comparatively late years. Not until Mr W. C. Hazlitt published her letters to Miss Stoddart (in "Charles and Mary Lamb: Their Poems, Letters and Remains;" Chatto and Windus, 1874) had we any direct means of estimating for ourselves that fineness and strength of Mary's intellect which her brother implicitly refers to here, and for which he had a respect that was commensurate with their mutual affection. In the present Essay he speaks, as it were in passing, of Mary's serenity and detachment amid conflicting opinions and creeds; and leaves us to infer her wise equal kindness, her comprehending friendship, for types of character widely divergent and mutually opposed. A flood of light is thrown upon this by these letters, in one of which she speaks of herself as having "a knack of looking into people's real character and never expecting them to act out of it—never expecting another to do as I would do in the same place." In the same letter she tells

that somewhat too business-like and husband-stalking young woman that she disapproves of some part of her conduct without taking offence at it: "because it is your nature, and your temper, and I do not expect or want you to be otherwise than you are. I love you for the good that is in you, and look for no change." Mary Lamb was a great psychologist, and would have been one of our greatest novelists, but for the periodic visitations of calamity that were her life-long doom and that took the heart out of all great hopes and forbade the projecting of any long labour.

"*A spacious closet of good old English reading.*" This was doubtless the book-room of Samuel Salt. While we may take the description as well warranted, and believe that the assortment of books was both old and English, it would be a mistake to infer, as editors and biographers have inferred, that the Elizabethan dramatists (other than Shakespeare and, perhaps, Ben Jonson) formed any noticeable part of the collection. The "fair and wholesome pasturage" more probably referred to the Restoration Dramatists, some racy old divines, and such lay divinity, or knowledge of good and evil, as is to be found in the pages of Defoe, Smollett, Sterne, Richardson and Fielding—authors "without whose works" Mr Salt's library "would not have been complete." This seems worth remarking, for, unless I am mistaken, the drift of the phrase "good old English reading" has been completely missed. That phrase expressed, as by an "aside," a note of defiance to the scrupulising over-anxiety and morality of *modern taste*, and especially of the *modern educators*—your Mrs Barbaulds, and your Mrs Trimmers, and others of a school which Lamb could hardly speak of without profanity. Also, under the influence partly of the German invasion, which was already well begun, and partly of the Scots invasion, which was in full blast (Walter Scott having presented England with a body of literature most rich and dramatic, but from which Sex was almost completely absent), the romancists of two generations back had receded into a kind of antiquity, and fallen into a kind of disrepute. For the most part, people remembered only that Defoe was crude and Smollett was coarse and "Jonathan Wild was too low."

"*The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End.*" Perhaps it was the oldest thing that Mary also could remember; for in the story of *Louisa Manners, or The Farmhouse* she describes the delight of a little girl of four in making acquaintance with the ways and the wonders (to a city child) of Field- and Farm-land. See *Mrs Leicester's School* in vol. vii. of this Edition.

"*The youngest of the Gladmans.*" Compare with this passage a letter to Manning, who seems to have been living in their neighbourhood in 1819: "How are my cousins the Gladmans of Wheathampstead and Farmer Bruton? Mrs. Bruton is a glorious woman—

'Hail, Mackery End!'

This is a fragment of a blank verse poem which I once meditated, but got no farther." Really, a glorious woman was worth more than that, whether in the way of inspiration or of diligence! To Mr and Mrs Bruton the indolent poet was indebted, in 1823, for an acceptable offering of young pig; but even that did not finish the poem.

"*B. F.*" Barron Field, a friend of Lamb (but, in spite of the name, no relation), who was called to the bar and received a judicial appointment in New South Wales. See *First Fruits of Australian Poetry*, and Note thereon, in "Critical Essays" (vol. iii. of this Edition); also *Distant Correspondents*, which follows here.

Modern Gallantry

("London Magazine," November 1822)

"*Joseph Paice of Bread-street-hill*" was a real personage, as Lamb explained in a letter to Bernard Barton; but the description of him given in this Essay falls short, for once, of the reality. To be sure, Lamb is here only concerned with the subject of good manners to women, not with the boundless benevolence of a perfectly single and selfless nature. For particulars, some readers may care to turn to the "Athenæum" for 1841, pp. 336 and 337; where also the reason of Paice's lifelong celibacy is differently given, with circumstances that are even more to his honour than any faithfulness to a memory. Briefly, he made way for a cousin of his, whom the lady liked better; and thereafter almost drained his fortune away in helping the couple through life. Yet that was but a detail in the well-doing of Paice. The Shakespeare commentator referred to was his uncle, and in the "fine sonnet" (quoted in full in Canon Ainger's Note) he urges his dilatory nephew to take to him a wife

> "And raise a virtuous heir
> To build our House, ere I in peace retire."

But his nephew had by this time decided that the charities of his nature should "sprinkle the ground" of human life wherever he touched it, not "fill a pool" in which he himself might fish for happiness.

The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple

("London Magazine," September 1821)

This, one of the most famous of all the Essays, is rich in every kind of interest and every kind of literary charm. It is autobiography, history, legend, mythology almost: so greatly are some of the figures projected upon the imagination. Finally, it

has been supposed to be fiction, and those arresting individualities the creatures of the Essayist's brain. Not only Samuel Salt, however, but Coventry, Twopenny and the rest are true portraits. Canon Ainger's Notes to this Essay are a primary authority to which the reader more minutely interested in Temple men and matters must be referred for confirmations and corrections of Lamb's account. "*Susan P——*" was Miss Pierson, sister of the Peter Pierson mentioned later; "*J——ll*" was Jekyll, the Master in Chancery; and "*B——d Row*" was of course Bedford Row, and is still the same, in all senses: the Harley Street of lawyers, as Harley Street is the Bedford Row of doctors. "*Lovel*" is John Lamb the elder. This Essay may be said to contain—in its glimpses of his almost orphaned childhood, his staunch and mettlesome maturity, his premature senile decay—the essential biography of Charles Lamb's father. "*R. N.*" was Randal Norris, Sub-Treasurer and Librarian of the Inner Temple, "my friend and my father's friend all the life I can remember." The Essay entitled *A Death Bed*, from which these words are taken, reads as a very pathetic after-piece to the passage about Norris here. (See "Essays and Sketches," vol. iv. of this Edition.)

"*His 'flapper'*" = his prompter or remembrancer. (See "Voyage to Laputa," ch. ii.)

Grace Before Meat

("London Magazine," November 1821)

"*C.*" is Coleridge, and "*C. V. L.*" is Charles Valentine le Grice, whom the reader has met in the same great companionship already. The joke with which he is here credited has been claimed for others. If he was guilty, he expiated the sin later by becoming a clergyman himself. The allusion at the end of this Essay to a period when the Blue-coat Boy went unbreeched is very interesting, and has—may I point out?—quite a scientific value. For it enables us to explain the inconvenient length of the Blue coat to-day by reference to a time when the coat was both jacket and trousers; or rather, both kilt and plaid. A quainter and more complete example of organic survival—the organ continuing when its function and utility have passed away—could not well be found outside of that famous museum of anachronisms and remainders, the British Constitution itself.

My First Play

("London Magazine," December 1821)

"*My godfather F.*" We know nothing of him but what we learn here. The initial "F" and his having property in Hertfordshire, create a slight probability that he was a Field and a relation, however distant, of Charles Lamb's mother.

"*On her elopement with him from a boarding-school.*" It was not, however, from a boarding-school, but from her own house that she took flight.

"*To crop some unreasonable expectations.*" So in the Editions; but Mr Fitzgerald points out that in John Forster's copy this is altered, in Lamb's own handwriting, to *drop*. And this "final correction," as Mr Fitzgerald rightly calls it, is a manifest improvement.

Dream Children: a Reverie

("London Magazine," January 1822)

This Essay was written under the influence of a protracted dejection—"a deadness to everything," he calls it in a letter to Wordsworth—occasioned by his brother John's death: and to a sudden revelation that his brother had lately died the whole Essay leads up through a mist of memories and beauty. Into such an atmosphere, we might be sure, the idea of his own early love for Alice W——n would "sweetly creep"; and with it comes the recollection of other loves, less thankless and disastrous, that made his youth seem, in comparison with all other times, the Sacred-History period of his life. The reader will meet elsewhere with descriptions of Blakesware and references to Gilston (the "newer and more fashionable mansion" of the Plumers); and the Poems and Letters will be found to contain the grounds for hazarding a guess as to who "Alice W——n" was, or at least where he met her. Canon Ainger has been at some trouble to settle this point, and decides that her name was Ann Simmons, that she belonged to a hamlet near Blakesware and that she married a Mr Bartram, a pawnbroker, of Princes Street, Leicester Square. The latter part of the identification may be correct without conflicting with the notion (which I am inclined to cling to) that this fair false maid belonged to Islington.

Distant Correspondents

("London Magazine," March 1822)

For "*Barron Field, Esq.,*" to whom this true chronicle is addressed, see a preceding note. "*Lord C.*" is Lord Camelford; who did, in fact, leave such instructions for his burial in "a country far distant." Lamb's "Key" says that "*Sally W——r*" was Sally Winter; a charming and teasing name, that might have belonged to her who was "sometimes forward, sometimes coy." But we know nothing of Sally. "*J. W.*" was James White; for whom see the next Essay, and references in the "Letters."

The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers

("London Magazine," May 1822)

This—and also the succeeding—is a peculiarly *Elian* Essay, and is therefore one over which an Editor is tempted to linger and be superfluously impertinent. Let him mind his own business, however, and (having first commended the Essay most specially to the reader's head and heart) let him explain that "*My pleasant friend Jem White*" was a schoolfellow of Lamb's at Christ's Hospital, and in later years a friend toward whom he had a great general liking—in spite of some causes of imperfect sympathy. The good-fellowship and mirthfulness which was the note of White's character interposed no ease; nor gave any allowance, seemingly, to the more serious feelings of others. So there were times when Lamb avoided the company of White as he would have turned from the promptings of levity in himself. Nevertheless, he always championed him loyally, and was urgent to get others to confess what an immense fellow and a fine wit—"a wit of the first magnitude"—Jem White was. Also he never lost an opportunity of praising an early squib of White's, "Original Letters of Sir John Falstaff," etc.; for which see "Critical Essays" (vol. iii. of this Edition).

"*Our trusty companion Bigod*" we have met before; and shall meet again (in vol. ii.) as Fenwick of the "Albion." He and his comrade Fell—and with them, perhaps, at certain moments, Jem White—were among the least "trusty" of Lamb's companions. The two former could be trusted, indeed, to drop in of an evening; but their visits did not improve the midnight hour and were not looked back upon with satisfaction next morning either by the moralist or the economist in Charles Lamb, and there was in him much of the saving grace of both characters. He was liberal, and full of allowance for humanity as any man could be; none the less, these "friendly harpies," in the period from, say, 1798 to 1802, wasted his time and devoured his slender substance, and he was not blind to it. But though his conscience groaned and his purse dwindled, he could not close his heart or his door against them. And this Essay, in no small degree, explains why.

A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis

("London Magazine," June 1822)

"*Unfastidious Vincent Bourne.*" Vincent Bourne was a master at Westminster, from which school he had himself gone to Cambridge. Cowper, who was one of his pupils, expressed "love for the memory of Vinny Bourne," thought him one of the greatest

Latin poets of any age except the greatest, and translated some of his verses into English. Writing to Wordsworth in 1815, Lamb says: "Since I saw you I have had a treat in the reading way, which comes not every day, the Latin Poems of V. Bourne, which were quite new to me. What a heart that man had, all laid out upon town scenes, a proper counterpoise to *some people's* rural extravaganzas." He also translated into English some of the "Poemata" besides the one given here. Bourne was born 1695, died 1747.

Lamb also, the reader perceives, was unfastidious, and therefore was at liberty to be great when the occasion offered. What a tremendous description of that truncated Humanity—he writes of that poor fellow in the gutter as Michelangelo might have carved him in marble, wanting almost a third of the complete body of a man, yet with the sublimity—and the defiance still—of a demi-god in bondage!

A Dissertation upon Roast Pig

("London Magazine," September 1822)

"*My Friend M.*" is of course Manning. He was, as already pointed out, a man of much and strange knowledge, outside the mysteries of mathematics; and may very well have told Lamb, out of folk-lore or other esoteric reading, some tale which formed the nucleus of this great invention, without going to any Chinese manuscripts for the matter. It is foolish to try to be too wise here, to aim at a precision and certainty which the mind of Charles Lamb delighted in making impossible. Nevertheless there has been controversy among Editors and much laying-forth of learning. Mr W. Carew Hazlitt thinks that the "origins" of this dissertation are to be found in an Italian poem by Tigrinio Bistonio (which was somebody's pseudonym) entitled "Gli Elogi del Porco," or, as who should say, "In Praise of the Pig," published at Modena in 1761. But though it is hardly correct to say that Italian was Chinese to Lamb, he certainly did not know enough of Italian to have gone wandering after such casual rarities of humorous reading in his own hours. A more likely source, if we are to look for printed sources at all, is the one pointed out to Canon Ainger by Dr Garnett, lately of the British Museum—namely, a story of the Origin of Cooking which is to be found in a treatise "De Abstinentiâ" by Porphyry of Tyre. Canon Ainger suggests that as Taylor the Platonist published a translation of this and some other treatises by Porphyry in 1823 (the year following the publication of this Essay), Manning may have known something about the work in preparation, and may have spoken of it to Lamb. Which is quite possible, to be sure; only I think it is equally possible that Lamb invented the whole myth himself, and that it grew to be what it was—as such things do in the hands of humorous writers great and little—by the historical

elaboration of a happy thought. Such a happy thought may well have occurred to him after writing the letter to Coleridge which is referred to in the next Note but one, though a passage in Allsop (3rd ed. p. 115) leaves us no choice but to admit Manning's name, as having some uncertain relation to the topic.

"*Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade.*" The Editor may take this opportunity of explaining, what ought perhaps to have been explained in the Preface, that he has throughout these Notes deliberately eschewed, on what he thinks are good literary and critical grounds, all pretence of identifying Lamb's quotations. Notes are a great evil at the best, and if readers were wise they would see that they lose more than they gain by them. Nevertheless, they desiderate such things where they feel their absence; and indeed the desire to have, as it were, a friendly and informed index-finger accompanying them through the pages and pointing from something in the literary text to something in the life of the man of which it is the trace, the record or the ideal issue and memorial—it is a very human and intelligent desire, which has a good claim to be gratified. All the same, though the Reader gains, he also loses something by this knowledge. Something, surely, of the essential atmosphere of art is, as it were, dispelled and brushed away by that disturbing and clearing-up activity of the annotator. Something, at least—not all, truly!—is gone of the largeness, the timelessness, the infinity, and mystery, and richness, which the Essay on *The South Sea House* or on *Blakesmoor in H——shire* had for us when we read them first in early youth or boyhood, knowing nothing at all of Charles Lamb, and having but a hazy notion, perhaps, of when he lived. At any rate I have thought that this interpretative aid might very well stop at biographical and personal elucidations; and that not only to point out the *man* wherever we find him in his works, but also to track the *author* in all his divagations and literary allusions, is to carry the dissolving process of analysis to a point at which it becomes idle if not mischievous. Here also there is an art, there is a charm to be destroyed: and, not to make many words about what is an important matter, I may say that next to coming upon a delicious quotation and recognising it as an old friend in an unexpected scene, is the delight of coming upon such a quotation and knowing nothing about it except that it is beautiful, and belongs to the world in which we found it—found it, and left it there. And there is good economy in this; for it reserves for the reader the possibility of another delight another day; when he shall come upon the same passage again, with sudden recognition and joy, and greet it, this time, as an old friend! But for this conscientious conviction—I must ask the Reader to believe—I am quite capable of having either supplied references to the sources of Lamb's allusions out of my own reading or reference-books, or of having quietly stolen from my predecessors whatever seemed needful, "and nothing said."

But the couplet which Lamb quotes here is another kind of matter. This quotation is certainly the most delicious bit of mischief that he ever managed to perpetrate. In the Letters to Coleridge about the end of 1796 Lamb pours unmerciful mockery on the latter's *Epitaph on an Infant*, and indeed displays an animosity towards that innocent production that is neither easy to justify nor to reconcile with his own general character either for tenderness or for tact. Nevertheless, he was irreconcilably irreverent, and still mocked it; and now, at the end of nearly thirty years, the gods sending him the opportunity of a millennium, he applied the lines to the sad case of an untimely-nipped sucking pig, and so found a use for them at last.

"*In my way to school* (*it was over London Bridge*)." These words have scarcely received the amount of attention they might fairly claim. Canon Ainger alone remarks upon them; but only to say that they are one of Lamb's mystifications, and curiously in conflict, as it happens, with the reference, later in the Essay, to a time "when I was at St. Omer's." St. Omer's need not detain us; but there is something important, if we could only find out what it is, underlying these words "*It was over London Bridge.*" For earlier in this very year 1822 Lamb wrote a letter to Coleridge—a letter which had more to do, I fancy, with setting him on to write this Essay than all the Mannings and Chinese Manuscripts, to say nothing of Porphyrys of Tyre, between here and the moon—and in that letter he tells this very story about his Aunt's cake and the beggar to whom he gave it; and again he says that it was over London Bridge that the thing happened. Here are his words: "One of the bitterest pangs I ever felt of remorse was when a child—my kind old aunt had strained her pocket-strings to bestow a sixpenny whole plum-cake upon me. In my own home through the Borough I met a venerable old man," etc. Now this letter being written to Coleridge, the friend of his boyhood, and the man who was more familiar with his family circumstances in those early years than all his other correspondents together—plainly, the idea of mystification is at once excluded, and we must therefore ask what the words in the Essay and in the letter mean. Unfortunately, there is an ambiguity in both passages: for in the Essay, the words "it was over London Bridge" may either mean that the *school* was over London Bridge, or else the whole phrase may be what the grammarians call, I think, a *prolepsis*, in which case it is conversational, hasty, anticipative = "*it* (this thing that I'm going to tell you of) *occurred* over London Bridge." Similarly in the letter: the phrase "In my way home through the Borough" might either mean "home to my father's house after a visit to my aunt," or "home to school after being with my parents during the holidays." Let us now see what are the hypotheses between which we have to choose.

1. If the words "In my way home through the Borough" and "In my way to school (it was over London Bridge)," both mean the same thing, then we have discovered, I think, that for a term or two, or more, before entering Christ's Hospital, little Charles Lamb was at some kind of domiciliary or boarding-school on the Surrey side of the river. Notice that he says this occurred "when I was a child." Now he was nearly eight when he entered Christ's Hospital, and Coleridge entered the same term. If the matter in question occurred while he was at *that* school, would he have said, in writing to his old school-fellow, "when I was a child"? I think it is more likely that he would have said "when I was at Christ's;" and more likely still that he would have said "when we were at Christ's."

2. Or if we let the phrase in the Essay, "In my way to school," go out as merely dramatic, and take only the words in the letter ("in my way home"), then we discover that Aunt Hetty was not domiciled with the Lambs during the whole of Charles's childhood. But every line he has written about her seems to imply that she was so domiciled; and Mary's letter to Sarah Stoddart (September 21, 1803) puts the matter out of all question.

Other hypotheses present themselves, but they have so little stamina in them that they are not worth dissecting. If we assume, for instance, that the Lambs had moved from the domicile of Samuel Salt some years earlier than is usually supposed, and had lived for a time in South London before settling in Little Queen Street, and even before Charles left Christ's Hospital, we get "no forrader." For, *ex hyp.*, his aunt was living with his parents, and she would not have crossed the river to bring him a cake for him to carry home. And even if we suppose that he had *bought* it with money which she sent him for the purpose (an altogether wild notion), we should then have to account for the phrase "when a child." At the same time, the letter to Coleridge is there, and cannot be explained away, and I see not what we are to make of it if we don't make this: that between the days of pot-hooks and hangers at Mr Bird's Academy in Fetter Lane, and the rich-memoried days at Christ's Hospital, there was a period, long or short, during which Lamb was extra-domiciliated at some scholastic establishment in South London. Of this period of his life he has vouchsafed us no record, and may, for obvious reasons, have had but dim recollections; these being soon afterwards all obliterated by the greater impressions of a scene that was more kindred to his nature, and that became a part of it for life. It may seem strange that he has nowhere else spoken of this. But for that matter, to what a mere accident do we owe what he has told us of his infant-school days at Mr Bird's Academy! And again, had he not happened to hit on a sketch of the old South-Sea House as the subject for his *first* tentative

paper in the "London," he might well never have troubled to go back so far in a later Essay, when he had topics in plenty and heaps of confidence. And in that case we should never have known of his having been in the South-Sea House at all. We do not know, by the way, where his brother John was educated, yet we may be pretty sure that he had more schooling than Fetter Lane afforded. Perhaps he had it at that school "over London Bridge" to which Charles (it would seem) was sent before the presentation to Christ's Hospital had been secured or perhaps thought of as possible.

A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People

("London Magazine," September 1822; reprinted from No. 4 of "The Reflector," 1811).

Notable among the lesser Essays for its sly Elianism. May one point out that this Essay (and other things of Lamb's) could not have been written by a married man, nor yet by a bachelor, as bachelorhood goes? By the life of "double-singleness" which he lived with "my cousin Bridget," he belonged in a manner to both worlds, was a freeman of both those faculties *quoad hoc*—was a bachelor and just himself; and yet a householder, a family man, with a family circle of acquaintances, in whose marryings and general menageries he interested himself, with little feeling of being an alien or an outsider. In this Essay he chooses, for the fun of the thing, to make himself one.

On Some of the Old Actors

("London Magazine," February 1822)

This and the following Essays were originally a Series under the above title in the "London Magazine," though the one on *The Acting of Munden* had previously appeared in "The Examiner," and yet again in "The Athenæum," before it reached the pages of the "London." When preparing the Essays for book-publication, Lamb re-arranged and cut out a good deal here, so giving these Essays the form in which the Reader finds them. Two of the cast-out passages make little articles which have an interest of their own, and will be found (with illustrations from old portraits) in vol. iii.

"*Oh la! Bobby!*" Mr Fitzgerald states that "this was one of Lamb's pleasant fictions," and that "it was at Suett's funeral that one of the mourners made the exclamation, as related in Barham's Life of Hook."

On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century

("London Magazine," April 1822)

This has been found, by the commonplace, a difficult morsel of wisdom to swallow and quite impossible for them to digest profitably. Their view is expressed in Macaulay's Essay on the Restoration Dramatists. What his lordship there says is unimpeachable common sense, and very suitable for his purposes and theirs. Nobody would wish them to think otherwise. If such people agreed with the profounder dicta of men of genius, nothing but disaster could result—this frame of things, as Lamb says, would be reduced to chaos. For such people would certainly draw from these dicta, in the busy blundering process of their ordinary thinking, inferences and applications which the man of genius—poising his speculative mind finely upon the pivot of a thousand convergent considerations, and aware of the contradictions that shadow and limit every fragment of truth—quite clearly perceives to be no intrinsic part of the matter. To this Essay I have already made an insufficient reference in vol. i. p. xlvi; and here I can only say that in proportion as psychology becomes an exact science, and in proportion, especially, as the psychology and genesis of those moods, or conditions of mind, which are held to belong to the sphere of morals, come to be worked out and the mental quantities of each such mood evaluated —then more and more will the profound truth of Lamb's contention in this Essay become a thing incontrovertible except by that stupidity which it would be a misfortune to conciliate.

On the Acting of Munden

("London Magazine," October 1822)

See Note to *Some of the Old Actors;* also two papers on Munden in "Critical Essays" (vol. iii. of this Edition).

Thus wonderfully—"*with the sun and stars about him*"—does Lamb conceive and utter the final words of this book. One would have thought that such a passage alone would have thronged readers to the pages, and sold off an edition. But though the book, "Elia: Essays which have appeared under that Signature in the 'London Magazine,'" came from the Press in 1823—and though Lamb was the dear friend and favourite colleague of the group of most gifted writers in England at that time, who were ever sounding his praises and who unanimously looked upon him as a rare human spirit apart and a genius altogether above their own mark—yet, withal, it was not until 1833, and in the months preceding his death, that a Second Edition was felt to be called for.

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